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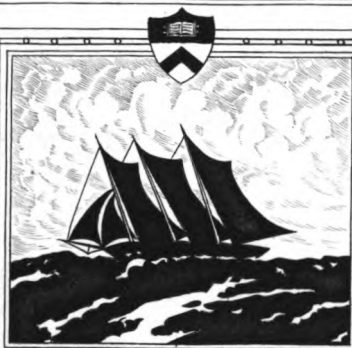


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TROUT FISHING IN KASHMIR

BY

ALBAN WILSON, B.S.O.



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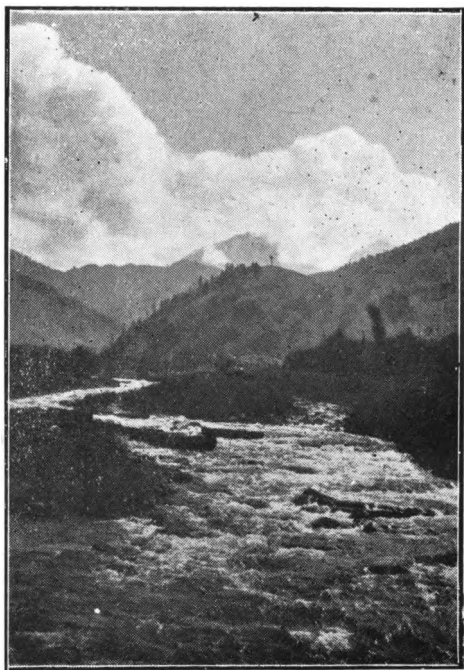
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TROUT FISHING IN KASHMIR.



A cloudy day on the Bringi.

TROUT FISHING

IN

KASHMIR

BY

LT.-COL. ALBAN WILSON, D.S.O.,

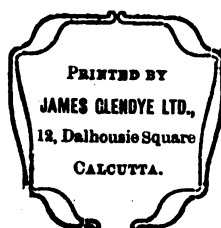
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TO

MY OLD REGIMENT

WHOSE MEN CONSTANTLY
HELPED ME WITH MY
SPORT FOR NEARLY
THIRTY YEARS
IN PEACE
AND WAR

(RECAP)
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INTRODUCTION.

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Well may the Mogul Emperors have claimed to have discovered a Paradise on earth, when they left the brown plains of India behind them and gazed down from the heights of the Pir Panjal mountains on to the valley of Kashmir.

Few, if any, countries in the world can boast such a variety of attractions and sport. For the artist, scenery of a grandeur and beauty that cannot be surpassed, for the lover of nature, an ever changing panorama of butterflies and flowers, bird and forest, glades and streams, with the everlasting snows of centuries standing out clear and immovable above them; for the collector of trophies, ibex and ovis ammon, antelope and gazelle, with a dozen other varieties of big game, sought for by sportsmen from all corners of the earth, whilst the mighty markhor and barasingh can boast aloud that no other land in the world can produce their equal. Small game abounds, chickor on the lower slopes of the hills, pheasants amongst the rocks and forests higher up, whilst the whole valley is a chain of jhils and lakes, where the wild fowl and snipe rest in their thousands. The one sport that nature would seem to have omitted in its calculations was good angling, so a very brief description of the rivers may not be out of place.

The main river of Kashmir is the Jhelum, but draining into it are numerous offshoots and streams, which take their sources from the snow-fed hilltops, and gathering strength, they change from mountain torrent to stream, and, flowing through the foot hills, join the mother river slowly passing through the valley. These side streams are such as to delight the heart of a fisherman, here a foaming torrent breaking into a long deep pool, there a bank of weed with a clear patch of water, which seems to ask for a dry fly to be floated over it; again a meeting of the waters, which might hold a thirty pound salmon, and, to frame the picture, grassy banks and bushes, green slopes and forest, where it is no uncommon thing to disturb a black bear

at his morning meal, or to hear a stag roaring his challenge above you, perhaps see him as he stands amid the pines, where, as Scott describes him, he :—

“ Like crested leader, proud and high
Tossed his beamed frontlet to the sky.”

That such glorious streams should be uninhabited by any fish, more sporting than the “choosh” and “chirroo,” seemed a waste of great opportunities, so, in 1900, a committee of sportsmen as mentioned in chapter II, sat to discuss the question of the introduction of trout. Mr. Frank Mitchell was elected Secretary and it is greatly due to his energy and management, backed by the above mentioned sportmen, that the streams of Kashmir are what they are to-day. Arrangements were made by him for the importation of the ova, and although trouble after trouble had to be overcome in the initial stages of the enterprise, he successfully came through them all, and the “*Salmo fario*” is now, I hope, established for ever in Kashmir. This was the beginning of the venture only, for, from the hatcheries at Harwan, where the trout were started, ova have been sent out to all parts of India, Kulu, Nainital, the Frontier, Assam, and many others, and if ever trout fishing becomes general in India, it will be due to Frank Mitchell and the Committee, who originally planted the flag in Kashmir.

In 1902, it was foreseen that difficulties might arise with the State, so the Resident decided that the further control and management of the trout rivers should be taken over by the Game Preservation Department, Mr. Mitchell consenting to continue as the general adviser and Honorary Director.

The first river to be stocked was the Arrah or Dachigam stream flowing through the State preserve of that name, a grand stream, which takes its source from the high lakes, lying between the Sindh and Liddar rivers, finally flowing through the reservoir, which forms the water supply of Srinagar.

In 1906, followed the Achabal, which comes hurtling and rushing from half a dozen springs from under the Achabal hill and then flows like an English trout stream, through green meadows and ricefields,

till it joins the Jhelum near Islamabad. New nurseries were formed here, to supply the annual output of yearlings and two year olds, required for the rivers at the top end of the valley. The Veshau, with its two branches the Istahal and Kulgam, or Tehsil, quickly followed and I shall always remember the joy with which I saw, in the autumn of 1908, a 2½ pounder taken on a fly by Mr. J. H. Phelps, out of the first of these. The Kishenganga and its tributary the Burdwan were also stocked in 1908, and the Burdwan is now a typical dry fly stream, which yields fish up to three pounds. These afford grand sport, when you consider that tiny flies and the finest gut are necessary in the still clear waters of this river.

In the same year, the Bringi was started. Seven hundred yearlings were put down from the hatcheries at Achabal, in the upper water, near the Game preservation sanctuary at Rajparan, followed next year by two thousand more fry, and in September 1910, I tried this part of the river and took fish of sixteen, fifteen, fourteen inches, etc. From this on, stocking was continued, both by ova from Harwan and fry from Achabal, and the Bringi is now full of magnificent trout, and is, I think, about the best river we have got. The record trout for Kashmir was killed in this river and the average size of the fish taken is far heavier than in any other.

The later rivers to be taken in hand are the Madmati, a grand stream which joins the Woolar lake at Bandipur and which should, in the near future, run the Bringi close; the Erin, which has so far not fulfilled the promise I hoped for, the Wangat which drains the snowclad slopes of Haramook and is therefore seldom fishable before the late summer, the Thicker, a branch of the Liddar, and the Nowboog, a tributary of the Bringi, and lastly the high lakes of Gangabal, which prove that an altitude of some 12,000 feet is no handicap to the welfare of the brown trout.

Experiments with the Rainbow are now being carried out by Mr. Mitchell and it is hoped that before long the Manasbal lake will be well stocked with these grand fish. If so, it will be a splendid addition to the Kashmir trout waters and should greatly enhance the popularity of the already famous sport.

The rivers have been carefully mapped and their pools named, but it remained for some energetic and experienced sportsman, who had the time at his disposal, to thoroughly test the rivers, study the local conditions, flies, etc. and write down his experiences for the guidance and use of coming anglers.

This work Colonel Alban Wilson has carried out in great detail in the book, which he now presents to the public, and I can only conclude by advising all, both those who are fishermen and those who love nature and its surroundings, to get it and wander with the author amid the pleasant streams and forests of Kashmir.

H. R. WIGRAM, MAJOR,
Secretary, Game Preservation Department,
KASHMIR AND JAMMU STATE.

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Sketch Map Achabal River (upper water) at end of book.

CHAPTER I.

After over thirty years' service in India, I spent the summers of 1918 and 1919 in Kashmir, to sample the trout fishing, of which I had heard and read a good deal. Kashmir has always been noted for the abundance of its indigenous fish, but, since the British trout was introduced, the importance of all others naturally receded into the background.

My wife and I first reached Srinagar, about the middle of June, after a wearisome hot motor journey of about two hundred miles, during which the hired car broke down on nine occasions, the least of which necessitated the removal of a tyre, whilst we sat in the sun, and watched the chaffeur throwing his repairing kit about in the dust. On arrival, we had to wait six days for our heavy baggage, although it had gone on a week before, but this was due to the crass stupidity of the servant in charge of it, to whom had been given our address, written in both English and the vernacular. This worthy went to the hotel, told the Manager we were coming, and sat down to wait for us, till routed out by enquiries made through the police and every other means we could think of. We then discovered that, though he still had his written instructions, it had never entered his thick head to show them to anyone.

We were both struck by the resemblance of Srinagar to some parts of Germany: the roads lined with poplars, the architecture of the Europeans' houses, the orchards with their regular rows of apple and other fruit trees, the cornfields without fences, and even the style, not to mention the smell, of the surrounding country villages. On our second visit, even the German himself was not absent, one of the first visitors of the season being an absolutely typical Hun, not even masquerading under an adopted British name, who had come up, accompanied by a lady, not his wife, of the same type.

Indeed it appeared as if the possession of a foreign name was a better introduction to some of the highest circles of society than being a senior British official.

Although there exist endless rules for the instruction of visitors and guide-books, which contain the rates one should pay servants and boatmen, for hire of boats, transport, etc., these seem to be more noticeable for their breach than for their observance, though the Kashmiri is very fond of quoting the rule, when it is to his advantage, and objecting to be bound by it, when it is to the visitor's.

As the 1918 edition of one Guide-book says: "Visitors should obtain reliable information as to real current prices and resist the constant efforts at extortion." A very sound warning, but one more easily given than followed, for in the last two years, a list of prices of food stuffs was published for the first fortnight of April, and none subsequently. The Kashmiri tradesman is a most unscrupulous robber who will seldom fulfil any bargain he has made, and he is well backed up by the boatmen or local servants one has hired, who therefore all expect their bit on everything sold to their employer. In this sort of dealing, the Kashmiri is streets ahead of the ordinary Indian tradesman. The war has been made the excuse to enhance the price of everything the "Sahib" requires, the rent of house-boats is three or four times as much as it was four years ago, though the price of the native's food has remained practically the same, if one can believe the published statement of the official, whose duty it is to look after the interests of visitors.

To continue from the same Guide-book: "If left to himself he (the Kashmiri) refuses to sell his farm produce, except at exorbitant rates, and declines to assist travellers, the higher the prices the less he needs to work." This last statement is most unfortunately true as regards the rest of the world, but I think his disinclination to help is more the result of inbred laziness than anything else.

When one arrives anywhere, a small crowd will assemble to watch one's doings, and the most effectual way to disperse it is to tell some one to lend a hand, or sell fowls or rice.

The men, in every boat one passes on the river, call out to one's own boatmen to enquire who is on board, where he has come from, where he is going and what he is going to do. If one is out fishing, they will engage one's attendant in earnest conversation to ask the

same sort of questions, so I cannot understand why surprise is so constantly expressed at the way Orientals are so well posted up in one's private affairs. Nothing is too trivial for discussion amongst them, even when they have never spoken to one another before, and neither has the least idea who the other is. The average Kashmiri is a dirty, lazy, avaricious robber and can give most Indians points in lying.

Both sexes of Mahomedans wear and long filthy sort of shirt, hanging a little below the knee; this custom, so they say, was introduced by their conquerors, who ordered both sexes to dress alike, because they had fought so gallantly, but it seems much more probable, judging from the present day Kashmiri male's behaviour, that he was made to dress like a woman as a sign of contempt, as he was such an arrant coward. Anyhow, their present rulers have no high opinion of their subjects' courage, for few, if any, true Kashmiris are enlisted in the regular Imperial Service Regiments, which are mostly composed of Sikhs, Dogras and Gurkhas.

The scenery of Kashmir has been so often described, both in prose and poetry, that I shall say nothing about it, except that for beauty and grandeur it comes up to all expectation.

Having come there to fish, it was necessary to get information about the rules and conditions. This was soon obtained from the office of the Game Preservation Department, where I was presented with a pamphlet of some twelve pages of foolscap, which laid down, in somewhat involved phraseology, which were the various "sanctuaries," "trout waters," "reserved waters" and "protected waters," as well as the permissible methods of taking fish in them. "Trout waters" are those into which the brown trout have been introduced, though it must not be inferred they have necessarily remained there. Of these there are some twenty lakes and streams, which are supposed to be closed to everything except angling, but not half of these afford good trouting. The mode of fishing in the other waters varies from a cast-net twenty feet in diameter, to a "walruz," which is a line, with hooks attached, limited to five hundred yards in length. "Sanctuaries" of course, being sacred places, are closed to fishing of any sort.

A license ranges in cost from two rupees for the year, for fishing with rod and line in 'protected waters,' to sixty rupees for the season in the 'trout waters.' An abstract of the rules is given in chap. III.

All the trout waters are branches or tributaries of the Jhelum. In addition to taking out a license for the trout waters, each angler must also have a permit, which is usually limited to a week on any one stream or part of it, a most sound provision, for it ensures no river being overcrowded or overfished, whilst on some, the permit is only for a day or so.

The trout season extends from April 1st to September 30th. During the first two and a half months, there is a good deal of snow water, but in spite of this, fish are to be caught, though from the middle of June to the middle of September is the best time. All the trout waters contain local fish, which are chiefly "choosh," (1) "chiroo" (2) and "khont," (3) besides "snow-trout (4)" in those which are glacier fed. The choosh and khont are very much alike, in appearance something resembling a tench, with very small scales and yellow on the sides. They both rise well to the fly, take practically any sort of bait, and jump like a trout when hooked, though their other movements are not unlike those of the grayling. The chiroo is a handsome fish, silvery, with black spots. He runs up to twenty pounds and more, though one over eight pounds is uncommon. All these fish, with the exception of the snow trout, are poor eating and are full of little bones, like a herring. The snow-trout is in shape something like a gudgeon, with small scales and greenish blue blotches on his sides, he takes a worm greedily, gives absolutely no play, but is quite good to eat. He seldom exceeds a pound in weight and averages about three ounces. Of the trout, one cannot speak too highly from a sporting or culinary point of view, though the Kashmiri cook will spoil him if he can, by either skinning him, frying him with onions, or serving him up half raw, unless given most particular instructions. These trout are thicker and better conditioned fish than any I have met with in rapid streams in Europe, in fact, the large ones are too sturdily built to be really graceful.

(1) *Scheizathorax intermedius*.

(2) *S. Esocinus*.

(3) *Oreinus sinuatus*.

(4) *Diptacus maculatus*.

They are somewhat 'dour' risers, possibly because one seldom sees a proper hatch of fly coming down an Indian river, by day, but flies are there nevertheless. Another reason for the trout not rising very well is probably the enormous amount of fish food they get.

As the number allowed to be taken in one day is four, over nine inches in length, on all the open rivers except one, where it is six it is as well there is not a regular hatch of fly, or one's day's amusement might be over in half an hour. One generous and very sensible rule is that if one gets an undersized fish, which is badly hooked and unlikely to recover, it may be kept but not counted towards the day's catch. The trout are found at all altitudes from about 5,000 to 12,000 feet, but some of the waters will probably never be anything but artificial trout streams, as the fish are said not to spawn in them, such as the Istihal and Koolgam branches of the Veshau, and the Thicker branch of the Liddar river, which are really irrigation channels taken off the main river. In these the supply is kept up by annual restocking. On the other hand, some are ideal highland rivers, in places torrential, in places composed of lovely pools and shallows, their banks covered with bushes, and their beds full of boulders, behind which the trout can lie in comfort. Some indeed seem too rapid even for trout to lie in them.

The chief factor against trout being more widely distributed in Kashmir, is that in winter, many of the smaller rivers almost dry up, when bears, otters, herons, and of course the human biped, do their best to clear out the inhabitants, and no amount of annual stocking would turn such into good fishing waters.

Mr. Frank Mitchell, the Honorary Director of trout culture, wrote me: "The high level lakes and streams are what require attention, if the brown trout is to become more than an exotic in India. The area I am now in, eleven to twelve thousand feet, is well stocked, and I am distributing from here to other areas as I can catch fish small enough to travel. The lakes are strongholds, which will always keep well stocked, as they do in Scotland, in fact, the climate and fishing are very similar. The trout in these lakes average about one and a half pounds and the fry have gone about

nine miles down stream." In reply to a query of mine as to whether the local fish would not be likely to swamp the trout, he replied: "Your remark was made to me about twelve years ago by an American expert and I disagreed with him. In some streams the trout have cleared out the native fish and fattened on them." Still, I can't help thinking that, as the native fish are in their best condition in winter, when trout are at their worst and are breeding, their room would be more desirable than their company, and would lead to the trout having to look more to insects than fish for their own food, and so becoming better risers. Also I think that the coarse fish devour the trout spawn and fry in those rivers, where they are said not to breed, for if trout are bred artificially in hatcheries, I see no reason why they should not do so naturally in rivers at the same elevation, and of the same temperature.

The best rivers for trout are the Bringi, Achabal, Thicker, the Istihal and Koolgam branches of the Veshau, (all at the upper end of the Jhelum valley,) the Arrah, twelve miles from Srinagar, the Madmati, four miles from the Woolar lake at Bandipur, the Burdwan stream in Gurais, three marches from Bandipur, and lastly the Wangat river, nine miles from Gandabal. If one is not fond of camping, all these can be fished, within ten miles of a houseboat, with the aid of a tomga, motor, or pony, except the Bringi, the Burdwan, and the Wangat, but this last is within a mile of Kangan, where there is a dak bungalow.

From this it must not be inferred that there is only trout fishing in Kashmir. All the rivers swarm with country fish, which are mostly good fly takers, fight well, and will, besides, take almost any bait; minnow, spoon, frog, mulberry, etc. A bag of thirty or forty of these can be made in a day with ease by anyone, who knows how to fish, except during May and June, which is their breeding season. The Sind river, between Kangan and Gandabal, being one of the chief spawning grounds in Kashmir for these fish, is closed to all kinds of fishing between May 1st and June 15th, in fact, *all* "reserved waters" are supposed to be closed to netting during this period, but it goes on all the same, and judging by the multitude to fish evidently doesn't do much harm. In my opinion, it is wonderful the trout are not poached to a greater extent than they

are, for the watchers do not seem inclined to stop a determined transgressor, so long as his acts do not result in too much damage, or if he is inclined to defy them. Where they might do better work is in destroying the nests of kingfishers on the trout rivers, and killing more herons. A kingfisher's nest is very easily discovered and nothing is simpler than to plug the entrance up with a stone, if too much trouble to dig it out.

Mahseer are to be got at Ningal, on the Woolar, of good size, *i.e.*, up to fifty pounds, and also at Sopor, where the Jhelum leaves the lake, but they are generally caught by trolling a frog in the former place, which is not very exciting, and the mosquitoes, there are very bad ; moreover, only one good fish a week per rod has been about the average for several years.

I would remark that one could fish all over the United Kingdom with infinitely less chance of success in getting a really big river trout, (that is, one of eight pounds or more) than one has of doing so in Kashmir, and would probably have to pay a good deal more for the permission to try and catch him, if the river was preserved. Anyone, who is keen on trout-fishing, and does not wish to kill more trout than he needs for his own and his friends' consumption, could not do better than give Kashmir a trial. In summer, that is in June, July and August, the climate in the valley is distinctly hot, in spite of the elevation being over five thousand feet, but it is by no means unbearable, and there always seems to be difficulty in getting the smallest amount of supplies or transport whenever they are required, still the sport is worth undergoing some inconvenience for. More serious however are the occasional outbreaks of cholera, for one can never be sure in camp that one's servants do not use filthy water, no matter how much one may warn them, if it is less trouble to do so, than to go a little further to fetch clean; also one never knows what dirty ruffians may not be allowed about the cooking places, in one's absence, or what insanitary atrocities are not committed in the vicinity of the tents. One feels a slight degree safer in a house-boat.

In view of the money spent in trout preservation, I cannot help thinking more waters might be stocked, but this is far from implying

that there is not a very good result from what is done, compared with what is to be seen in other parts of India, where trout have been introduced.

More vermin might certainly be destroyed, pools staked to prevent netting, and more prompt action taken against transgressors, when they are caught. Still when dealing with such champion liars and procrastinators as the Kashmiris are, it is surprising that anyone is ever brought up at all, or convicted on the evidence, when he is brought up.

CHAPTER II.

INTRODUCTION OF BROWN TROUT INTO KASHMIR.

The introduction of "*Salmo fario*" into Kashmir was the idea of Mr. Frank Mitchell, now one of the oldest residents of Srinagar.

In 1899, he, his brother William, Colonel A. E. Ward, one of the best sportsmen Kashmir has ever known, Colonel Unwin and Captain Allan each guaranteed £50 towards the expense of importing trout from Scotland and to form a fishing club. The Duke of Bedford promised to give the ova, in return for some Kashmir stags, which had been presented to him by His Highness the Maharajah and Major Godfrey, at that time assistant to the British Resident, arranged for the despatch of the first consignment. This was sent out and reached India early in 1900, but, as the steamer in which it came had no system of cold storage on board, the whole consignment perished before it arrived at Bombay. The same year, Major Godfrey went home on furlough, and a second lot of ova were given by the Duke and shipped, so as to reach Kashmir in December. These were obtained from Howietown Fishery, near Stirling, and about six thousand of them arrived at Srinagar in good condition, where Mr. Mitchell at once commenced the work of hatching them out in his own bungalow, where all preparations for the purpose had been made. *As soon as they hatched*, some of the fry were put into a pond in the garden and some were sent to Harwan, twelve miles away, and placed in an irrigation canal, a section of which was netted off to prevent their wandering. The fry kept in the garden pond were hand-fed, whilst those put into the canal were dependent for food on what they could find for themselves.

By October, 1901, the hand-fed trout varied in size, from under four inches to ten and a half inches in length; those at Harwan were more uniform in size and averaged about five inches.

Stockponds were prepared at Harwan, to which some of the young fish were transferred, others being put into the Arrah stream,

about four miles from there, the valley of which was being closed by the Maharajah, for a game preserve.

When subscriptions were first raised to import the ova, it was understood that the State would lease the Arrah and other suitable streams to the fishing club, but, *after* the fry were hatched, the Resident expressed an opinion that it would be wrong of the State to let its rivers to private individuals, but suggested instead that the State should give a sum equal to that already collected, original subscribers should not have to take out an annual license, and the trout culture included in the newly formed "Game Preservation Department," which should assume financial and executive control of the venture. The fishing club was abolished, but Mr. Mitchell continued to look after the breeding operations in his spare time at his own expense, and luckily for future anglers succeeded in enlisting the sympathies of the next Resident, Sir Louis Dane by taking him out to Harwan, showing him the stockponds and getting him to cast a fly on them. The result of this astute move was that funds were immediately forthcoming, rivers were allotted for stocking and the future of the trout assured. In 1903, a disastrous flood swept down the Arrah valley, carried away the stockponds and scattered the trout, but in the winter, it was good to find that they began to spawn in places of their own selection.

The State then offered funds for construction of a new hatchery, which was made in the village of Harwan itself, and more ova were sent for from Scotland, the fry from which were put into the new stockponds, others also being constructed at Achabal and since then the work has gone on continuously without a hitch, with the result that several rivers in Kashmir are now full of trout, of a better average size than in most rivers in the United Kingdom, which, in sporting and edible qualities, leave nothing to be desired, and as Mr. Mitchell and Major Wigram have looked after all the breeding and stocking operations, anglers, who fish these lovely streams, should remember what a very great debt they owe them for their sport.

From Kashmir, ova have been sent to Assam, Kulu, Nainital and Gilgit, in all of which places trout have now been established.

The greatest feat was getting them to Gilgit, a journey of two hundred miles by road, on which passes up to fifteen thousand feet had to be negotiated in December, when they were over twenty feet deep in snow. The work of preventing the ova being frozen and possibly destroyed, presented the greatest difficulty, but it was overcome, and trout were established in the Gilgit Agency, but have not been altogether a success.

One thing, however, does not seem to have been seriously considered, either with regard to the fish or the big game shooting, and that is, neither Mr. Mitchell nor Major Wigram, the Secretary of the Game Preservation Department, is in his first youth. Man is but mortal, and though one wishes them both many more years of health and energy, if sport is to be maintained in Kashmir, which in the interest of the state it should be, on account of the large amount of money sportsmen spend in the country every year, both these officials should have young active men as understudies, because neither fish culture, nor a knowledge of such a large tract of country, not to mention a personal acquaintance with the character of the numerous shikaries and watchers is acquired in a few months even supposing voluminous note books are available for a newcomer's guidance.

CHAPTER III.

KASHMIR STATE.

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PURPORT OF THE RULES RELATING TO FISHING IN THE TROUT WATERS, 1919.

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Definition.

1. Trout Waters are all those waters in the State which have been, or are now being, stocked with English trout. No fishing is allowed in these waters without a license as well as a permit showing the water and period for which the license is issued.

Trout Waters.

2. The following are the existing trout waters defined under State Fisheries Regulations Notification 2 :—

1. The Liddar and its tributaries above Bhatkote bridge;
2. The Achabal river, and the Arput, above the bridge of Dunipawa ;
3. The Veshau and the Dandwar streams from their sources to the boundary pillar one mile below the bridge at Koolgam. The Tehsil branch is closed except under a special permit.
4. The Arrah river from Dachigam Rakh to the bridge at Telbal ;
5. The Burzil Branch of the Kishanganga river and the Gurai stream from their junction at Kanzalwan to their respective sources ;
6. The Burdwan stream at Gurais ;
7. The Wangat stream ;
8. The Erin and Sirindar streams ;
9. The Ahan water at Sambal ;
10. The Bringi river and its branches above the village of Aragam ;

11. The Lolab above the bridge at Raikpura ;
12. The Pohru above the bridge at Shallorah ;
13. The Madmati or Bandipur river, above the bridge at Kaloosa ;
14. The Kokernag stream ;
15. The Panzetrnag stream ;
16. The Thrieker river in the Anantnag Tehsil ;
17. The Gangabal and adjoining lakes on the northern slopes of Mount Haramook ;
18. The Manasbal lake, and
19. All tributaries of the above from the junction with the main stream to three miles up stream.

N. B.—Sportsmen possessing a Rs. 5 License for Reserved Waters *vide* Notification 8, and wishing to fish for country fish only in No. 1, 5, 9, 11, 14, 15, 18 *supra*, can do so on obtaining a special permit from the Secretary Game Preservation Department, and, on the distinct understanding that any English Trout captured by them will be at once returned to the water. With the above exception, no person can fish in any of the Trout Waters, unless he is in possession of a Trout Fishing License, *vide* Notification 8, or has been specially exempted by His Highness the Maharajah from taking out such a license, *vide* exception to section 7 of the Jammu and Kashmir State Fisheries Regulation.

3. The trout fishing season extends from the 1st April to 30th September. Fishing season.

4. The following are the sanctioned methods of fishing in the "trout waters" *viz*:— Sanctioned method of fishing.

On the Achabal and the Arput (2),
 The Burdwan stream at Guraiz (6),
 The Erin and Sirandar (8),
 The Bringi and Nowboog river (10),
 and
 The Madmati or Bandipur stream (13).

Fishing with fly only is permitted with the following exceptions :—

- (a) Fishing with minnow or spinning baits is allowed on the Achabal river (2) in the following localities, viz :—

{ The Sansuma junction pool.
The Sansuma bridge pool.
The Boilers pool, and any where below the junction with the Arput at Tajiwara.

- (b) On the Bringi, fishing as under (a) is allowed in the Wyl bridge pool and from Wyl bridge to Aragam.

In all other rivers, fishing is permitted,

- (z) by rod and line ; and
(ii) with artificial, natural and dead bait only.

N. B.—Fishing with worm is prohibited.

Application for licenses.

5. Applications for licenses to fish in the “Trout Waters” should be made to the Secretary, Game Preservation Department, Srinagar, or, in his absence, to the Director of Trout Culture care of Post Office, Srinagar.

Fees for licenses.

6. Licenses are issued on payment of the following fees :—

(a) For the season	...	Rs. 60
(b) For one week	...	„ 25
(c) For one day	...	„ 5

Privileges of Rs. 60 license holder.

7. The holder of a Rs. 60 License is entitled to fish in all the “Reserved” and “Protected” Waters of Kashmir, a list of which can be obtained from the Secretary, Game Preservation Department.

Licenses not transferable.

8. Licenses are not transferable.

9. Licenses are issued subject to the following conditions :—

Conditions on which licenses are issued.

(a) The number of Trout allowed to be caught in one day is limited to 4, except on the Arrah, where the number is limited to 6.

(b) A size limit of 9 inches is laid down, below which all fish must be returned.

N. B.—Fish of less than 9 inches which are badly hooked and unlikely to recover should be kept and not counted under (a) above.

(c) Fishing in the Trout streams (*vide* para. 2) is limited to one week at a time except on the Arrah river as defined in the paragraph 2, where it is limited to one day ; and on the Liddar river as defined in paragraph 2 where there are no such limitations.

N. B.—When the above-rivers are not occupied by License-holders under para 6 (a), (b), daily licenses may be issued by the Secretary, Fisheries, at his discretion.

10. Whoever is found fishing in any "Trout Waters" without a proper license, or whoever commits a breach of any of the rules set forth in paragraph 4, 8 and 9 *supra*, or whoever uses dynamite or other explosive substance or puts any poison, lime, or other noxious matter into any water with intent to destroy or catch any fish which may be therein, or whoever erects any fixed engine, weir or sluice on the bank of, or in, any water for the purpose of capturing fish, or whoever uses for that purpose any instrument other than those specified in paragraph 4 *supra*, or any net, or whoever aids or abets the commission of any of the above offences, shall be liable, on first conviction, to be punished with imprisonment (either rigorous or simple) which may extend to one month or with fine which may extend to

Penalties for offences.

Rs. 50 or with both. In addition to the above punishment, any fixed engine or net or other article irregularly used for the destruction or capture of fish shall be liable to be confiscated by the Darbar.

NOTE—The term "Fixed Engine" used above has been defined in the Jammu and Kashmir Fisheries Regulation of Sambat 1960 to mean and include any net, cage, trap, sluice or other contrivance for taking fish fixed in the soil or made stationary in any other way, but the erection of dams for the working of mills and the like is permitted, though in all such cases a free channel must be left open for the passage of fish up or down the river.

Penalty "for continuing" offence.

11. Any person continuing to commit an offence mentioned in the preceding paragraph after he has been warned by any authority to desist therefrom shall, in addition to the punishment awardable on first conviction, be liable to be punished with a fine which may extend to Rs. 10 for each and every day succeeding that on which he was so warned.

Penalty on second or subsequent conviction.

12. An offender convicted twice or more frequently of any offence mentioned in paragraph 10 *supra* shall be liable to be punished with imprisonment (either rigorous or simple) for a period not exceeding two months and with a fine not exceeding Rs. 100 or both.

Sanctuaries and penalty for fishing therein.

13. Fishing in "Sanctuaries," a list of which can be obtained from the Secretary, Game Preservation Department, Srinagar, is absolutely prohibited. The punishment for breach of this rule is—

(a) for a first offence, imprisonment (either rigorous or simple) for a period not exceeding two months or fine which may extend to Rs. 100 or both, and

(b) for a second or subsequent offence, imprisonment (of either description) for a period not exceeding six months or fine not exceeding Rs. 500 or both.

These punishments are liable to be in addition to that mentioned at the end of paragraph 10 *supra*.

14. Offences punishable under these rules shall be Courts by tried by the State courts in the ordinary way and in accordance with the Criminal Law of the State except in the case of persons, who are not liable to the jurisdiction of the State courts, when the trial shall be in accordance with the provisions of the law for the time being in force relating to such offences.

15. Any person or persons giving such *bona-fide* "Rewards." information as shall lead to a conviction under these Regulations (Fisheries), shall be entitled to a reward which may, at the discretion of the Magistrate trying the case, extend to the full amount of the fine inflicted.

(ii) Watchers of the Game Preservation Department and Fisheries, who shall give information under para (1) *supra*, shall not be debarred from receiving the full reward.

(iii) The Magistrate trying the case will have the power to grant the above rewards (1 & 2) *supra* on his authority without any reference to the Darbar.

N. B.—It is the intention of the Darbar that every informer who is instrumental in effecting a conviction shall be adequately rewarded.

16. (a) The grant of licenses, the appointment and dismissal of watchers and all matters of control, whether financial or executive, in "Trout," "Reserved" or "Protected" waters is under the Secretary, Game Preservation Department.

(b) The State reserve to themselves the right to close any river or part of a river at any time for State purposes, or if the river or part of the river in question has been too heavily fished, or for any other reason. The Secretary Game Preservation Department, Fisheries is

further authorised under this rule, to take immediate action if he is satisfied that it is necessary, reporting the steps taken to the Darbar ; and in the event of a License having been taken out for the period in question the Secretary is authorised to refund the License fees that have been paid.

Special powers reserved by the Darbar to themselves.

17. The Darbar reserve to themselves the right to refuse to issue any license or to cancel at any time any, license that may have been issued, should circumstances in their opinion, render such a step necessary.

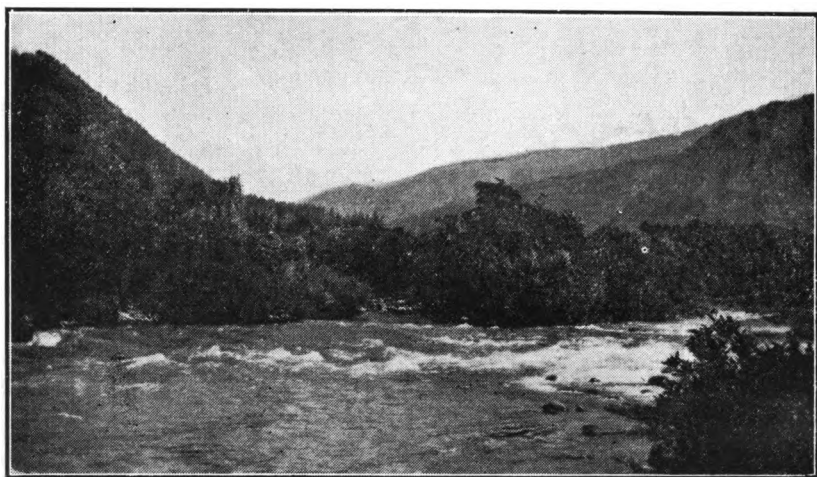
By order,

(Sd.) H. R. WIGRAM, MAJOR,

Secretary, Game Preservation Department,

KASHMIR STATE.

It should be mentioned, in connection with the above rules, that Major Wigram has lately prepared sketch maps, on a scale of 8 in. = one mile of the different rivers, which can be had from his office. He has kindly allowed me to reproduce one, which shows how clear and intelligible they are. In the above rules, a "fly" should be defined, for at present (1919) the natural fly or grass hopper could be used though this is not intended. In my opinion, a far better arrangement would be to give so many days in the season for a 60/- license, and let the angler take them when or where he likes, except say on the Arrah, also allow him at the rate of four trout per day, and let him take as many as he likes and with any bait except worm on each day so long as he does not exceed his total limit. In this way, numbers of the large cannibal trout would be killed off. The only argument against this arrangement, that I can adduce, is that the big trout probably kill off far more of the local fish than they do of their own species, and in doing so improve the trouting.



THE LIDDAR AT PALGAM.

CHAPTER IV.

THE TROUT WATERS OF KASHMIR.

Taken in the order of the list given in the rules, these are :—

(1) THE LIDDAR, which contains so few brown trout that it is not worth a visit on their account. Very rarely, one has been caught by an angler, worming for "snowtrout," which are very plentiful. The scenery is lovely, and on its account, Pahlgam, two marches from Islamabad or Bijbehara, is worth a visit.

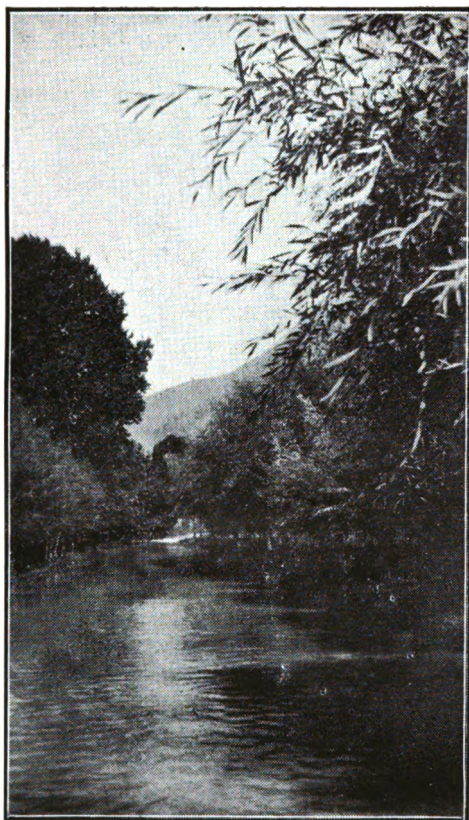
(2) THE ACHABAL is one of the favourite rivers. It takes its name from the Emperor Jehangir's old garden, in which it rises. This garden, which is still maintained in fairly good order by the State, is, like all of those made by the Moguls, rectangular in shape, and consists of terraces, planted with stately shade-giving trees, with a broad watercourse flowing down the centre, and falling in cascades at the various terraces; over these are platforms, where the Emperor and his retinue used to sit to enjoy the sound of the cool splashing water. There are also summer-houses, under which the water flows and in front of them square tanks, with rows of fountains. At the top end of the garden, the river gushes out, in a great volume of water, from under an overhanging rock, beside which are the ruins of an old "hummum" or Turkish bath. It is said to be an offshoot of the Bringi, but if this is the case, it must flow underground for about three miles. In the source, two or three good trout can generally be seen lying. Leaving the garden, the stream flows through rice cultivation for about seven miles to Islamabad, where it joins the Bringi and the Sandren. During the summer, the water gets discoloured early in the day, owing to the natives dibbling the young rice into the mud and attending to its irrigation. For the first mile or so below the garden, pools and falls have been created, by building dams and planting trees to regulate the current, but unfortunately these are being rapidly silted up, or choked with weed, which is too plentiful everywhere. The banks are fringed with willows, which, whilst affording pleasant shade, are apt to entangle one's line at times.

The Achabal is a delightful river to spend a week on, one can cast across it anywhere, and it contains a large head of good trout, which take the small fly very fairly well and are excellent fighters. There are many fish of respectable size, more than one would expect from looking at the river. The largest, captured so far, is a seven pounder caught in 1918, but fish from three to four pounds are far from being uncommon. In a week I got four from two to over four pounds, besides twenty four others over ten inches in length, and returned many smaller. In the watcher's book I saw that two thousand yearlings had been turned out in 1918 and 389 trout caught, which, if it represents an average year's turn out and catch, is a very good return.

One should really only use one fly on a stream like this, as the second is so liable to get caught up in the weeds, especially when playing a fish. Spinning is allowed in three pools, as well as anywhere below the Arpat junction, at Tajiwara. This stream is usually very muddy in summer and discolours the Achabal a great deal. Though also classed as a "trout water," it is not worth fishing, at present.

Trout are said not to breed in the Achabal itself, but as they do in the hatchery, which is fed from the river water, I see no reason why they should not, beyond the fact that the main stream swarms with local fish, which must devour all the spawn and fry in winter. The river, in places, seems literally stiff with choosh and chiru, and they must consume a great deal of food, which would otherwise feed the trout. On the other hand, their young must afford the trout a lot of succulent feeding, at the same time disinclining them to rise to the fly. Strangely enough, in Kashmir, the trout does not seem to have the same instinct of running up the sidestreams to breed, as it has at home, possibly because so many of them dry up in winter, so it would be useless to spawn in them, for fry remain pretty much in the same locality, where they are hatched, and seem more inclined to drop down stream than run up.

I have always fished the Achabal from a houseboat at Khanabal, by driving out about six miles to Tajiwara and thence fishing



THE ACHABAL.
(Water, Willow, and Chenar).

up to the garden, where my conveyance met me to return in, though many people prefer to camp just outside the garden, or else near Sansuma, a mile or so below it.

The proximity of villages, with their absolute lack of sanitation, the filthy habits of the natives, the swarms of flies and the numerous dogs, which make night hideous with yapping, have always deterred me from camping in such places, except under absolute necessity, and then only when the water supply is above suspicion, for the carelessness of Indian servants, as to where they get water from, and the regularity, with which they all foul it, as a matter of course, is well known. On a shikar trip, it is wiser to take a little extra trouble and remain fit, than take none and risk getting ill, thereby spoiling the whole of one's outing.

On the right bank of the river, below the junction of the Arpat, there is a clean good ground to camp on, well away from villages, which has a perfectly pure spring, and is an infinitely better place than either of the other two mentioned.

When at Achabal, a visit should be made to Major Wigram's hatcheries, which are prettily situated under the hill at the top end of the garden. These are maintained for stocking the rivers at the upper end of the valley. They contain sixteen stews and two large fry-ponds. To give some idea of the amount of trout turned out, I may mention, on the best authority, that in the season 1918-1919, seven thousand two year olds, and eleven thousand yearlings were distributed, whilst six thousand of the latter were kept back to grow for another year.

(3) THE VESHOU is one of the large tributaries of the Jhelum, at the head of the valley of Kashmir.

The trouting is in two irrigation off-takes, named the Istihal and the Tehsil branches, though I believe the trout are now breeding in the head-waters of the Veshau itself. The first named is about twelve miles from Islamabad, and nine from Khudawain, the latter branch is two miles nearer on the same road, which is a fairly good driving one. One can tie up a house-boat at Khudawain and

fish either stream from there, which this year was certainly more advisable than camping on the river, owing to the cholera, which was very bad in that neighbourhood.

Both the Istihal and the Tehsil branch at Kulgam are streams of a similar nature, flowing through rice fields near villages. Both have plenty of deep pools, with banks, stony in places, in others, fringed with rushes or great patches of weed. They contain plenty of good trout and, of course, countless Kashmiri fish.

Passes for the Tehsil are only issued by days, but one can get a week on the Istihal. There one may use any artificial bait or lure one fancies, in fact one can on all the streams, except on the Bringi (upper water), Madmati, Achabal and Erin, where the artificial fly, which also includes feather lures, is compulsory.

The best trout I got during my first visit to the Tehsil weighed just over five pounds, and I killed him at the very top end of the water; there are many much bigger than this, though none of them fancied anything I had to offer. I met here a Nawab, the only Indian I have met, who fished in European style, and he was quite successful, which was rather surprising, for his flies were tied by his boatman and were anything but works of art. Moreover, he was followed along the bank by a retinue of six or seven servants of sorts, who never made the least effort to keep out of sight.

The largest trout he caught weighed $4\frac{1}{2}$ lbs. and it being the first, he evidently expected his luck to continue, for, on leaving the river, his private secretary, rather an officious gentleman, very proud of a slight knowledge of English, which the Nawab himself did not speak, wrote in the Trout Register: "Fishes are intolerably scanty," and then went on to attribute this scarcity to the light nature of the punishments given for poaching, and to the fact that anyone, who could pay for the license and charter a conveyance of some sort to bring him to the river, could fish it, oblivious that such people had every right to do so, or that skill, to a certain extent, contributed to making a good bag. This last part was evidently directed at me, for he had seen my tonga; so I told the Nawab, who was not at all pleased to find the secretary's opinions recorded as his own.

Both these streams, during the summer when people are working amongst the rice, soon get muddy after a little rain, which spoils one's sport, if one is unlucky enough to get bad weather. The Tehsil is absolutely full of fine trout and on it, in July 1919, I had the very best bag, for average size of the trout, that I have ever made in my life.

Commencing just above the Kulgam Tehsil Court, from which this branch takes its name, I fished up for about two miles. The water was low and very clear. At the third cast made I rose a good trout, with the fourth I hooked him. He was over eighteen inches long and weighed $2\frac{1}{2}$ lbs. When away from Srinagar, in the hot weather, there is no one to give the trout to, except one's servants, on whom they are wasted, for they would just as soon have the Kashmiri fish, so it is a pity to kill more than one actually wants. On this occasion, however, I wished to give away a brace, so determined that, at any rate, they should be good ones, and that I would take nothing smaller than the first. -

To make a long story shorter, after working up, I fished the water down again with a medium sized "Cock of the walk" on a long line and caught twentyfour trout, of which only three were less than a pound a piece. Of these I retained four, the biggest was $22\frac{1}{2}$ inches long and $13\frac{3}{4}$ inches in girth, a male which weighed $5\frac{1}{4}$ lbs. He put up the best fight for his size any trout has ever given me, and took so long to bring to bank, I felt sure he was foulhooked.

On looking over a bush at the head of a pool, where a small trickle flowed in, I saw a tail, sticking out behind a patch of weed, in about three feet of water, just below me. Winding up all but about six feet of line, I chucked in just above the weed, saw the fish move, felt a touch and struck, when his tail came up nearly to the surface, so I thought I must have hooked it. He wobbled about a bit but soon made off into the strong current under the opposite bank, where he kept moving up to the head of the stream, then coming back and playing deep in the still water, in the most dignified and determined fashion. At last, after some ten minutes, his head came up, showing he was nearly done, and I saw he was hooked in the mouth all right, but he made one or two more grand efforts before the coolie got him into the net, and put his hand on the top to keep him there.

Twice he ran out thirtyfive yards of line, for there was no stopping him, when he really meant going, and as I was using-very fine gut, which had already accounted for well over forty trout, I felt none too sure of it, but it held for him and for several others after, till it finally smashed in a willow tree. I also took a five pound chiru, which looked a good deal bigger than this trout. This fish jumped on being hooked, and fought so strongly, that both the coolie and I thought he was a front, till he was coming into the net. Besides him, I killed fourteen choosh, up to three pounds in weight, over the division of which my servants and manjies had quite a merry verbal battle, on our return to the boat.

Of the four trout kept, the $2\frac{1}{2}$ lber. first caught was the smallest, the other two weighed $3\frac{1}{2}$ and $2\frac{3}{4}$ lbs. so altogether the bag bumped $14\frac{1}{4}$ lbs. the same as my best catch on the Madmati last year. I am sorry I did not trouble to weigh those put back, for I am sure the twentyfour must have been at least forty pounds altogether. There is no river at home that I know of, where one rod could take such a fine lot of "Brownies" in a day. Next morning, I covered the same stretch of water again. It was still low and clear, but there were signs of thunder coming up, and the trout would not look at the lure I was using, so I mounted a large peacock and yellow fly of my own manufacture, They came at this fairly well, but mostly rose short, and I only got sixteen, of which the two best were 4 lbs. 2 oz. and $3\frac{1}{2}$ lbs. Of those returned, only one was a small one, and three were at least three pounds each. They nearly all took just at the edge of the weed, under which they were evidently lying to keep out of the sun. On both days, they moved best between 8 A.M. and noon. The big one on the second day, also a male, was in exactly the same place, as the five pounder had been lying, on the previous morning, which shows that as soon as a big fish is taken out, another occupies his haunt at once. The largest trout taken out of the Veshau, so far, as recorded in the register, weighed $8\frac{1}{2}$ lbs. and was caught at a place named "Surprise Pool." Probably the spot was so named, on this account, for, if I have identified it correctly from the map, it does not look deep enough to harbour so big a fish. Both these branches are comparatively easy to fish, for the willows, planted along the edge of the pools, are not, as a rule, yet high enough to

seriously interfere with casting, if one takes a little care and remembers to look behind occasionally. The dams and "caulds" (piers of boulders built out for a few yards from the bank) are very well arranged, and the pools below them have not silted up so much as they have in the Achabal stream.

The Istihal did not fish so well, possibly because of the thunder, which was hanging about, still this did not seem to affect the Kashmiri fish, of which I took seventyfive in three days, but only ten trout, none of which could be called large ones.

A great many doves nest in the willows on both the rivers, and their cooing fills the air. The paradise fly-catcher also breeds there. • In summer, there are numerous thrushes, which, though somewhat different in appearance, sing very like those at home, in spite of the saying that the birds of India have no song. The young jackdaws are very bold, and one notices flocks of starlings, exactly like the European ones, feeding in the willows, or picking up insects amongst the growing rice. Herons are often surprised, when standing motionless in the shallows, which does not look as if they were persecuted much, an occasional waterhen is seen making for the shelter of the reeds on some quiet pool, whilst golden orioles, kingfishers and water ousels are everywhere, but the most beautiful of them all is the blue jay, which rears its young in holes in the high banks. The "solitary" snipe is occasionally seen in September, a very uncommon bird. So, if one does not always catch fish, there is plenty of bird life to interest one.

Swift dragonflies dart backwards and forwards over the limpid water, and butterflies, amongst which the swallowtail and tortoiseshell are conspicuous, abound. In late June and early July, there are not so many flowers, but there are bright yellow buttercups, a few blue cornflowers, small white carnations and wild anemones here and there, or in some quiet backwater, an occasional patch of yellow waterlilies, but the glory of the iris and may-blossom is over, and even the dog roses have almost all fallen. The wild apricot gleams ripe amongst the foliage, apples are coming on and the mulberries are falling, on which children, sheep and dogs feed greedily.

Truly the days spent fishing these lovely rivers will be something to remember with pleasure, whether one is sweltering at one's work in the plains, or has retired into the oblivion of a cottage, somewhere in the old country.

The Istihal branch is a good water to fish, but it naturally does not hold so many trout as the other (Tehsil). It is said to have been badly poached in the winter of 1915 or 1916, but history is silent as to what happened to the culprits, or to the watchers for not catching them. Here again is a river, in which trout would breed, if the local fish did not prevent their doing so. In the spawning season, the 'choosh' have been seen to follow a pair of trout to the redds, and eat up the ova as fast as it is deposited, yet, so far, there does not seem to have been any determined effort made to reduce the numbers of these local fish.

It would seem to be well worth while, as well as being quite feasible, to thoroughly poison some stream with lime, kill off all the local fish, then stock it with trout, and see what the result would be. Were this done, that stream would not require such regular replenishing from the hatcheries, as most do at present; of that I feel confident.

There is said to be a trout of about twelve pounds weight in the top pool of the Istihal. One angler has hooked it and several have seen it, but I have never had the luck to do either myself.

(4) **THE ARRAH** is a small stream about twelve miles from Srinagar, and was the first in Kashmir to be stocked. There are about three miles of it open to licensees, of which, when the water is right, about a mile is really good, but after the beginning of July, it is liable to dry up, as most of the stream is diverted into the Harwan reservoir, or into the cultivation below it. What becomes of the trout then, it is difficult to say, whether they push up stream into the Dachigam game reserve, or drop down into the deeper water nearer the Dal lake, or are taken by any one who likes, the fact remains, they disappear, and return, or else others come, after any rain, when the water rises again. If they go down, a great many must be taken by the villagers, who openly net part of the water which is supposed

to be reserved for angling entirely. I have seen their nets spread out to dry on the bank, a mile above the lower boundary and when I asked if they ever got trout, the reply was they never even saw one, which of course was untrue.

The bag on the Arrah is limited to six fish a day, and it is not difficult to get them, as they rise very well, probably because they have to depend more on flies for their food, there not being so many Kashmir fish in this river, as in most of the others. Now-a-days, one never hears of a big trout being taken out of it, a two pounder even being uncommon, but there are any amount of smaller ones. I once had the privilege of being taken into the game reserve by Col. A. E. Ward, who is in charge of all the "Rakhs" (special State preserves) in Kashmir, and was allowed to fish the stream. I caught over sixty, none of which was over a pound, and probably would have got a hundred, only for a very long time I was using a fly without a point to the hook, and could not make out why I seemed to touch so many fish and none of them fastened.

The trout breed well in the Arrah, and it is a pity that more of the water is not open, for they would naturally increase in size were more taken out. However that is not to be. There is one big pool about three hundred yards long, parallel to the reservoir, which is admirably suited for dry fly, as it is wide, besides being fairly deep and still. There are larger patches of weed in it, under which the trout lie. One bank is shaded by poplars and the other by willows and one can have a most pleasant bit of sport fishing it up with the dry fly, though not one fish in three that one hooks is brought to bank, owing to weed. Out of this one pool in November 1919 over 1,000 trout were netted for distribution elsewhere.

A visit to the hatchery should not be omitted, when passing Harwan. It is most interesting to see the fish fed, and the enormous trout some ten or twelve pounds in weight, pushing one another out of the water in their efforts to get the little fish thrown to them, is a sight to be remembered. Personally, I think a lot more could be made of the hatcheries, both here and at Achabal, by rearing more yearlings for distribution. This could easily be done by increasing the number and area of the stews. Putting out fry is to a great

extent only supplying food for other fish, not to mention kingfishers, beetles and dragonfly larvae, with which all the rivers abound. Another reason for increasing the number of stews is that the parent fish could be sized more carefully. One notices, when they are fed, that the big ones get most of what is going, so the smaller must lose strength and condition. No native, if he were in sole charge, would realise the necessity for this, for with them the weakest goes to the wall and stays there, and if he dies, it is bad luck, never bad management. This is very noticeable with all their farm stock.

As the water in this stream is liable to run short, one would expect to have more dams and pools arranged on it, as they are on the other trout waters, the Arrah being so close to Srinagar, in order to improve the fishing for visitors, but this is not done. It might be difficult, owing to the stony nature of the bed, but not impossible, seeing that lower down, the villagers constantly make them, to direct the water. If not, half a mile or so, higher up, might be thrown open to licensees for unfortunately netting has to be allowed in certain parts of the lower reach, in order to provide food for the Harwan hatchery.

The Harwan reservoir, into which part of the Arrah flows is a beautiful sheet of clear water, about a thousand yards long and eight hundred wide. It is not included in the ordinary trout waters, but one can occasionally get leave to have a day on it, and good bags are some times made.

It contains plenty of fish, both trout and the local kind, but not so many as one might expect, owing to its often running nearly dry in winter.

(5) The BURZIL and GURAI, tributaries of the Kishenganga, evidently contain but few trout, as no body goes to fish there, but they will probably improve in future, as good fish have been seen in them.

(6) The BURDWAN stream in Gurais, also a tributary of the same river, is reached in three marches from Bandapur, along the Gilgit road, distant about 43 miles, altitude 7,800 feet.

The valley of Gurais is one of the prettiest in Kashmir. The Burdwan flows through it, winding among flat meadows, but it is only

from fifteen to twenty feet wide. The fishing water lies between the village of Wanpuh and the junction with the main river, a stretch of about two miles.

For perhaps half a mile up from the mouth, the banks are thickly covered with willows, which make casting difficult, but above this there is little or no obstruction.

A certain amount of the water is sluggish, but pools have been made in the rest, by means of dams; these pools contain large numbers of trout, but they are mostly of small size.

One rod has been known to catch about two hundred in eleven days, of which about a quarter were over ten inches long, another got over a hundred and fifty in a week, of which the best weighed a pound and a half. So far, the record trout from the Burdwan measured eighteen and a half inches.

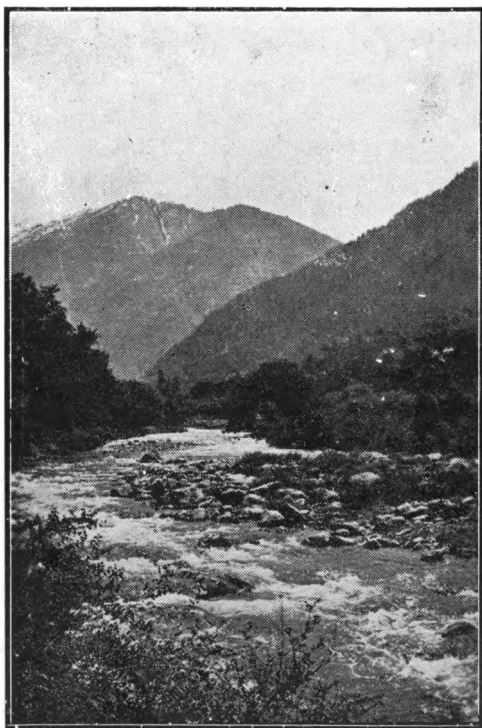
This recalls a remark written in the watcher's register by the Nawab's secretary, previously mentioned:—"Every day I have been catching four fishes, but if otherwise the rules I might have caught more than a dozen. A friend once told me that the age of the trout depends on its weight in pounds, as the years of her age. Taking this into consideration, I might thrust my opinion, that if the stream is closed for three or four years, one might be able to catch here, plenty of three and four pound fishes, when it would be reopened.

The game is not interesting on the whole, if simply small ones are caught, simply for belly purposes, but it is really very amusing to catch big ones and to enjoy their silly frisks. The watcher knows his duty well, simply through his assistance I have been able to show a complete number, I wish he must be a head watcher."

The Burdwan fish take the small fly uncommonly well, and those illustrated have been found very useful by several men, who have tried them this year, the "Coachman" and "Coch-y-bondhu" also kill well. Late in summer, like most Kashmir rivers, this stream gets very full of weed, but everyone, who goes there, enjoys his trip and catches plenty of trout, amid charming surroundings, so Gurais should be included in one's itinerary, if possible, especially if one is fond of dry fly fishing, for which most of the stream is well suited.

(7) **THE WANGAT** river flows out of Lake Gangabal and joins the Sind about a mile and a half below Kangan. Kangan is eleven miles from Ganderbal, by a good level riding road. The Wangat is crossed just before reaching the tenth mile. Anyone wishing to fish the lower portion of it can do so in comfort, by staying in the Dak Bungalow, which is a good one, with four or five large rooms, sufficiently furnished, but no servants except a caretaker. This stream is something like the Bringi or Madmati, only more rapid, consequently it has not so many deep pools, but there are plenty of big eddies, in which fish can lie. The going is not easy, for the banks, as a rule, are high, rocky and much overhung with bushes. So far, it has not shown much result for its stocking, only thirtyfive trout having been recorded in ten years, but none have been put in for four or five. I visited the Wangat in 1918, but only got three fish in two days, so did not stay longer. I was also considerably put off by my coolie having damaged my favourite rod, through deliberate disobedience of orders. In August, 1919, at the request of Colonel Ward, who wanted a report on its possibilities as a trout water, I tried it again very carefully with fly, minnow and clear water worm, on three separate occasions, which gave conclusive proof that, in time, it will afford quite good fishing, for I took six of and above three quarters of a pound, and returned several small ones, six or eight inches long. All these fish must have been bred in the river, or come down from Lake Gangabal, which is much the same thing, though I think it improbable that the little ones would have come so far in the time since they were hatched. Apropos of Gangabal, I was told rather an interesting yarn though it is probably untrue. This lake is an object of pilgrimage to Hindus, who go there to throw the ashes of departed relatives into its waters. Some years ago, it was stocked with trout and now the pious ones have come to the conclusion that the fish eat the ashes, so they petitioned the Maharajah to have the trout removed, and His Highness accordingly gave orders to Mr Mitchell to catch all the fish out of it.

Mr Mitchell, nothing loth, accepted this impossible task, catches what trout he can and puts them out in other lakes in the vicinity, which are not sacred, where they will increase and give good sport to anglers in years to come.



THE ERIN RIVER.

(8) THE ERIN river flows into the Woolar Lake, about two miles south-east of Bandapur. The valley, through which it flows, is thickly populated and contains some very fine timber. In May, the country side is lovely with flowers; the iris, (white, purple and mauve,) dog-rose and hawthorn blossom scent the air, whilst the large blue thistle lends a picturesque note of colour. This stream is not so large as the Madmati, in the adjacent valley, and does not carry anything like the same proportion of snow water, in spite of the fact that the snow covered slopes of Mount Haramukh tower above it, only a few miles away. The Erin contains some splendid looking trout water between Erin village and Tsantamulla, where it is joined on the left bank by the Sirandar stream, but it is sad to relate that its appearance belies it. For some reason, trout are extremely scarce, though why, it is impossible to say, and, except near the lake, even Kashmir fish are not numerous. Were there many in it, one would be able to see them, but I have fished it three times, when all conditions were favourable, and never moved or even seen a trout. The register confirms that this is unfortunately a common experience.

At the desire of the Secretary of the Game Preservation Department, who wished to know if it were anyhow possible to make a good basket, in June, 1919, I fished every likely bit of water, between Erin village and Tsantamulla, upstream with the natural stone-fly creeper, a certain killer at home in similar water, and coming back tried all suitable spots, with a small quill minnow, but never moved a trout, or saw any fish at all, except a few small choosh. The complete absence of herons and the scarcity of kingfishers, birds one constantly sees on all other streams, showed that they also do not think the Erin river worth fishing. There must be some reason for this unsatisfactory state of affairs, which should be enquired into, for as previously stated, the water looks absolutely ideal. The only surmise I can make is that, probably in winter, when the water is very low, it is systematically poached by the inhabitants of the village at its mouth, all of whom are professional fishermen.

One angler, in the register, suggests the depredations of otters, but this is not likely for they would scarcely be able to clear out

the Erin so effectively, and do so little damage to the Madmati, without leaving some trace of their presence. Anyhow, at present, the river is not worth the trouble and expense of a visit, from an angler's point of view, though an artist would probably consider it a paradise

With the bleat of the sheep and the scent of the wild rose, it only needs the purple of the heather and the call of the grouse, to make one imagine oneself at home in the north country again.

(9) THE AHANE, which lies a mile or so above Sambal and to the east of the Manasbal, is really a "Jhil" or marsh, with some deep water in the middle. It was one of the first places to be stocked with trout, but they have done no good and there is no place where they could breed. Since they were put in, only one has been taken out, and he was a dead one, of some six pounds weight, found lying on the bank. As giving passes for trout fishing in these two places, would at present be rather an unwise proceeding, for being given a permit could only raise an angler's hopes and might result in giving him a false impression of the trout fishing in Kashmir as a whole, if he elected to try these two places first, none are issued without the angler being warned that he is not likely to catch anything. The only tangible result of my own visits was a dish of terns' eggs, a good substitute for plover's, which they strongly resemble in taste and appearance, only they are slightly smaller. The nests consist of a few bits of grass loosely put together, floating on the water, and the eggs must be frequently sunk in a strong wind, for the nests were moved by the wash of a small boat coming close to them. Wild duck evidently breed there also, for several pochard were seen early in June which were clearly nesting. There is good chickore and snipe ground, quite close to Manasbal.

(10) THE BRINGI, river has the greatest reputation of any of the Kashmir trout waters, though its celebrity is due more to the goodly number of really big ones that are caught in it every year than to the sport it otherwise affords.

Personally, I consider that it is a difficult river to fish, because the trout are such uncertain feeders. They are so well fed that they

scarcely trouble to move to a fly or minnow, unless it almost hits them on the nose.

In 1918, which was a good year, 360 trout were taken, -which does not seem much of a bag for a stretch of water, long enough to permit of four rods fishing it daily for six months, till one realizes that fifty-four of these fish, or one in every seven, weighed four pounds or more, whilst two or three were between nine and ten pounds, which would be considered magnificent specimens of the brown trout in any country.

To reach the river, one can ride, drive, or motor to Achabal, forty miles from Srinagar, or go by boat to Khanabal, whence Achabal is seven miles by road, (this way takes about fortyeight hours longer,) thence march to Wyl, for fishing the lower beat, (fifteen miles,) or Dandipur the for upper. This is two miles further, but there one camps in the middle of the best water of the upper beat. A word of caution is necessary to any body contemplating spending the night at Achabal, since, for the last two years, the rest house there has been populated by vermin of the largest and fiercest kind I have ever met with in India, and complaints in the visitors' book have resulted in no improvement. The first three or four miles of this march are fairly good going, then come two miles across and along the stony bed of the Bringi, in which one has to cross about a dozen of the irrigation channels, into which the river is broken up, only one of which is bridged, a most unpleasant bit to ride unless one's pony is very sure-footed. The rest of the journey is along a good unmetalled bridle path, passing through several prosperous looking villages, surrounded by rice and corn fields and orchards of apricot, apple and pear, with clumps of fine walnut trees, here and there. The road is bordered in places with willows and occasional poplars, in others hedged with briar, barberry and hawthorn, under which flourish forget-me-nots, buttercups and many other common English flowers. Each village too has its plantation of willows, in which the villagers hang festoons of hay, just beginning to be cut in August. Sometimes the Kokernag stream skirts the path, as trouty a looking a bit of water as any in Kashmir, but so far it has not been properly stocked. As it does not dry up in winter, trout would undoubtedly breed in it. Finally one reaches the village

of Wyl, 6,500 feet above sea-level. Near Wyl bridge is one of the best places to camp, from which to fish either the upper or lower beat, because, above it, there is no means of crossing for some miles, and the river is not easily forded. Consequently, those sportsmen, who have the upper beat, camp at Dandipur and scarcely ever fish the right bank. From Wyl, with the aid of a pony, which can be hired in the village, either bank or either beat can be fished in comfort. It would not cost much to run up a few temporary bridges during the fishing season. The long ladders, used for gathering fruit, laid across from rock to rock, with a rope handrail would not be expensive and would be a great convenience. The watchers, who have very little work to do, should be ordered to clear out the briars, thistles and docks, which overhang many of the pools and make casting difficult. An angler seldom seems to think it necessary to root out a thistle, or any such thing on which he gets hung up, and a coolie of course would never do it for him, unless told to.

It is the fashion to rail against the laziness of the watchers, I admit I have done so myself, but one should realize what uphill work it has been to stock these rivers, and afterwards to preserve them. If the watchers are as useless, why is it that every stream has not been denuded of its fish long ago? The Kashmiri nets, "guddles," dams, and spears, whenever he gets the chance, and is an inveterate poacher by day or night. He probably is only deterred from using poison, because he hates spending money on buying it. The whole tone of most men, who fish in Kashmir, is one continual 'grouse' and they never give a word of thanks to anyone who has had anything to do with the making of the fishery. The Secretary of the Game Preservation Department cannot ensure that anglers catch fish, he can only ensure that trout are there, and there is no doubt of that. He does his best to try and provide good sport, therefore the least the visitor can do is to give him and his staff credit for what is done, and not expect them to achieve the impossible in providing amateurs with big bags. I was rather amused with the head watcher at Wyl. I offered him a trout, which he virtuously refused, saying that, when he was made Head watcher, he had taken a vow never to eat fish any more. Afterwards, he requested my cook, who had heard this conversation, to give him

one. That worthy promptly asked him why he wanted it, as he could not possibly eat it himself, after what he had said. He had no reply ready, so departed without it.

The Bringi valley is very pretty, the hills on one side are covered with pine forest, on the other they are barer and more rocky, where, morning and evening, one can hear the chickore calling and sometimes see them sunning themselves on the boulders, but of other game birds none are to be seen or heard. The lower slopes of the hills are terraced for maize and the flat parts of the valley are filled with rice fields, which give a very fertile appearance to the country. The river bed is rough and stony the banks being generally covered with high grass, which hides the boulders and makes walking difficult.

The Bringi is formed by the confluence of the Diusu (Deosoo) and Naobug (Nowboog) streams about three miles above Wyl bridge. The latter requires a special permit to fish it. It holds some very fine trout, particularly in the last three quarters of a mile of its course. In September, 1918, I took a ten-pounder out of it, some fifty yards above the junction. The Diusu is more or less of a torrent and too rapid for a fly water and the going is very rough, but there are one or two places within a mile of the Naobug, which hold large trout. On both these streams and on the Bringi, to within one pool of Wyl bridge, fly only is allowed, from here downwards, minnow and other spinning baits are permitted.

At this pool, the Ahlan water flows in on the left bank. This stream, though smaller than either of the two forming the Bringi, holds many excellent fish, and there are two fairsized pools below Tangtsum bridge, which contain real 'whoppers'.

In these I caught, in August, 1919, three trout, weighing altogether $25\frac{1}{2}$ lbs. besides getting another of six, halfway between the bridge and the junction. It is only a matter of time before the bridge falls into the river, for I noticed that one of the retaining walls has begun to bulge and crack, owing to percolation from the road above. "A stitch in time" would save it, but that first stitch is a difficult

matter to bring about in time, in a place where there is a very little British supervision.

When the bridge does go, the top pool will probably be spoiled.* I hooked the best of the three above mentioned fish in the eddy, just under the bridge, on the left bank. A corner under a rock was covered with foam, into which I cast the fly, and there was a pull, which at first I thought must be due to some bit of floating timber that I had not noticed, but soon discovered the mistake. An enormous trout leaped high into the air and came down into the strong current, where he lay for some time and then made off down stream.

There was a high rock behind me, over which I had to go in order to get below the fish, and on top of this my net coolie was sitting. I told him to get hold of my wrist and give me a pull up but he caught hold of the rod. I told him again to take my wrist, which at last he did, and by the time I was on the top the fish was stationary under the far bank, and there seemed to be something wrong, for the pull on the line felt very dead. The coolie went over the bridge and down the other side and said the cast had been caught round a stone and broken.

This man was one of those, who always think they know better than their employer what is required. One day, I was suddenly attacked by three savage dogs and, seeing they meant business, shouted to him to hit them, as he was carrying my net and walkingstick. He promptly turned about and went off, the dogs came on. I drove the butt of my rod into the mouth of one, kicked the second, but the third got his bite in before he was disposed of. The man's reason for his rapid departure was that he was going to see if he could find someone, whom the dogs knew and would obey. Some winged words passed and he said he would like to go. As he was constantly asking for money, or clothes, and telling all sorts of yarns as to how other 'sahibs' fished unfairly, though he had only been with me three days, I told him to go as soon as we reached camp and luckily picked up a really good man in Wyl village that evening. This one never opened his mouth, unless spoken to, was always ready when wanted, never

* It fell about a fortnight after this was written.

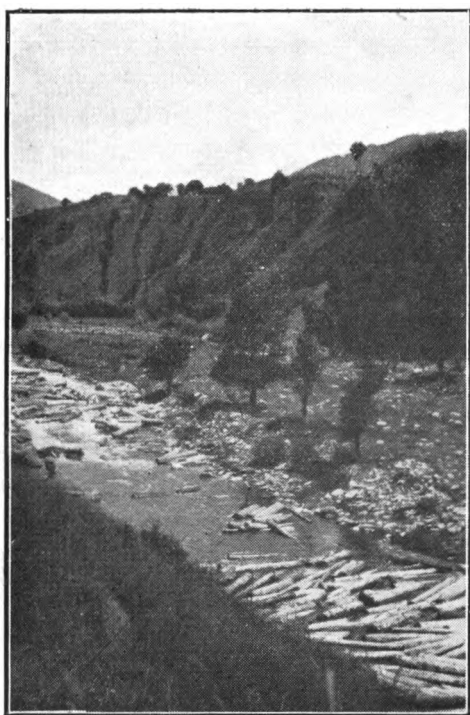
bungled a fish with the net, and, most wonderful of all, never asked for "buckshish." Exactly a week after losing this trout, I threw my fly, if a bunch of cock's hackles can be dignified by that name, again into the same eddy, and at about the third cast, there was the same sort of heavy pull, and again I was into a very big fish, which moved at once into the rapid, where, from his previous manoeuvres, I expected him to remain long enough to enable me to get over the rock behind. I told the coolie to go up first and see the line did not foul any grass or bush whilst I clambered up myself, and having got there safely I was in a position to command the situation, unless the trout went still further down stream. He lay for some minutes in the rough water, pulling steadily up stream, and all the strain I could put on with "1x" gut and a ten foot fly rod did not have much effect, till at last he went into the backwater under the opposite wall of the bridge, where he moved round with the swirl several times before entering the rapid a little lower down and almost straight below me. Next time he shifted he would be pretty sure to make for the next pool and, as there was another much higher rock to be negotiated, I thought it best to do it now, while the fish was fairly quiet. This rock was higher than the tip of the rod, so the coolie had again to go in front and take the strain on the line over the palm of his hand, whilst I got up, a thing I never expected him to understand. He did so, however, and I was able to get across and down the other side to the water's level without accident, where a much stronger pull could be got at the fish. This made him leave the rapid and try the other side, but, as there was now no backwater, he did not stay long before he turned and went at a good speed into the lower pool, taking out about forty or fifty yards of line before I could get abreast of him again. Here the water is very deep and there was plenty of room to play him in, but he did nothing exciting, merely swam doggedly up and down at a depth of anything from six to eight feet. Then he went into the middle, where the current was stronger, but had not the strength left to face it and came to the surface for a moment, when I could see what a beauty he was. I prayed that the hook would hold, for the bunch of feathers was clearly visible, halfway along his jaw. A little later, the coolie had him in the net, and lifted him out with difficulty. Whilst clearing his head to administer the happy despatch, I discovered

the hook had snapped, so it may be imagined how thankful I was this had not occurred a few seconds sooner, for he was the best trout I have ever caught, 10 lbs. 10 oz. in weight, $28\frac{3}{4}$ inches long and $16\frac{3}{4}$ inches in girth, a fine thickset cock, as yellow as gold. These big trout do not put up nearly so good a battle as mahseer of the same size would do, under like conditions, for they are not so active, but there is undoubtedly more satisfaction in getting one, than there is in killing a mahseer three times as large. Whether it is because the trout is rarer, better to eat, and possibly harder to circumvent, or whether it is because of the associations attached to him, I cannot say, but I would far sooner kill a ten pound trout in Kashmir than a fifty pound mahseer anywhere, and I have accounted for both.

Except for the big trout one gets, I do not think the Bringi is such a satisfactory river to fish as some of the other streams, the Madmati, for instance, for one does not see nearly so many fish, and, as I have said before, they are not good risers. Some days one will scarcely move a fish.

In July and August, there are often floods, which, though they run off quickly, make sport absolutely impossible while they last, not only on account of the colour of the water, but also on account of the thousands of logs, which come rolling down, bumping against one another, and sometimes even killing the fish, and, when the flood subsides, they get stranded, in places blocking the whole breadth of the river and entirely altering the configuration of the pools; all the same, the trout seem to move better in coloured water, so long as it is not of the consistency of pea-soup, than they do when it is clearer.

Below Wyl bridge and on to Diwalgam, the lower beat contains some lovely water for spinning, wide deep pools, a hundred yards or more long with a good stream flowing through them, ideal bits of salmon water. Sometimes, one can see great trout of ten and fifteen pounds weight lying in the shallow parts, when the water is clear, yet one can fish them, when every condition seems favourable, and never



LOG-ROLLING ON THE BRINGI.

have a pull. So far, only one trout has been recorded as taken below the Wyl bridge over ten pounds' weight and he was fourteen, but they are there all right and one day some lucky man will get one of twenty.

Although the trout in the main river are such uncertain feeders, sport is to be had elsewhere. Just below Diwalgam, there is an offtake on the left bank, which goes to feed some small flour mills. For nearly a mile, there are lots of trout, which run to two pounds and more, and take the small fly well. This is the only bit of water in Kashmir, in which I have seen trout "cruising" and feeding regularly on the surface. It is only from fifteen to thirty feet wide and considerably overhung with willows and bushes, but one can have excellent sport in it, if one puts most of what one catches back again. Besides the Ahlan, there are several other good bits of water. Above the Junction of the Naobug, on the right bank, there are two or three bright little mill-streams taken off the Diusu, which all hold far bigger fish than one would imagine. In one of these, I took a trout of four pounds in a pool so much overhung, that I had to get into the middle of the stream to play him and then once or twice he very nearly got mixed up with my legs, and I was broken by another, not quite so big, which got into a hole in the bank. At the back of the Dandipur camping ground, on the upper beat, is a mill lead, out of which, earlier in the year, fish up to six pounds have been taken, but to look at it one would never expect it to contain anything approaching that size. In these side waters the trout seem to rise fairly well all the day, but in the main stream it is not much use fishing between 11 a.m. and 6 p.m. In a week, in September 1918, I took, amongst many other sizeable trout, three between five and ten pounds, and this season, (1919) in fourteen days in August, five between six and eleven, but, of all these big ones, only one over seven pounds was taken in the Bringi itself, though I had hold of several, which might have been as big, but they unfortunately never gave me the chance of weighing them. Such is fisherman's luck! Therefore no one who comes to Kashmir to fish should fail to try the Bringi, for, with good weather and good luck, he might quite possibly kill a fifteen pounder, which, besides breaking the record, if he chooses

to skin it* and get it stuffed, may serve to remind him in after year of many a pleasant day's trouting in Kashmir and of one red letter one in particular.

(11) THE LOLAB, (12) THE POHRU, (13) THE MADMATI, Bod Kol, or Bandapur Nala, is one of the best trout waters of Kashmir; it flows into the Woolar lake, from which the best part is distant four miles. One can hire a pony and ride the four miles daily to Sonarwein, from one's house-boat, or camp on the river at Sonarwein or two miles higher up at Guzarbal. There is a Supply and Transport Office and depot at Bandapur, for the use of the troops at Gilgit, and another office at Sonarwein, where the officer in charge generally resides, for some months during the summer. The Madmati is a typical Highland river, flowing, over a rocky bed, with plenty of fine pools and runs. It has a greater length of fishable water than any river in the State, except the Wangat, but it holds an infinitely better stock of trout, which run to a good size and fight like demons. There seems to be one behind each boulder, and they rise to the small fly better than in most of the rivers.

* Skinning a fish is a simple operation. You lay him on a plank, with a piece of newspaper below him to protect his scales, and then cut along the medial line, from his gill to his tail. With the fingers, or the handle of a spoon, detach the skin from the flesh. When you come to the fins, loosen the skin all round them and then pull them out of the flesh. When the skin is all loose between head and tail, cut through the back bone as close to the tail as possible. Next turn the skin back over the head, cut through the back bone, and remove the body. Now with the bowl of the spoon remove as much flesh as possible from the head, and all fat, etc., from the inside of the skin, and the roots of the fins, cut out the gills, pull back the skin and take out the eyes working the fingers into the brain cavity. Now wash the skin thoroughly to remove all loose bits of fat, let the water drain off, and put the skin into a tin or jar. Push salt into the brain cavity, and fill the eye sockets with it; cover all parts of the skin with salt on both sides. Next day, it will be found the salt has drawn a lot of moisture from the flesh, pour this off and add more salt, till no more moisture comes away. Then roll the skin up in a bit of cloth, pack it in a tin, solder it up, and send to a taxidermist to be set up. It is presumed that before skinning, you have noted all dimensions, colour, etc.

Use no grass or anything which may rot in the packing.

A 5 p.c. solution of formalin is also good but it makes the skin stiff.

Sport is quite good early in April, before the snow has begun to melt in any quantity, but is liable to be spoilt by log-rolling. From then on to the middle of June, the snow water comes down and sport is not so good, for the river is very high and the fish will only come decently at a big lure, and not always at that. During July and August, the fishing is generally first class. The banks from Sonarwein to Budkot are not much overgrown with bushes, above that they are a good deal, and going is more difficult.

The first time I visited this stream was early in August, 1918, when I took twentytwo trout in the week, weighing over forty pounds. On two days, the water was spoilt by storms, but the last day was a red letter one. The first fish grassed was over three pounds and I put back all under two. The four to which one is restricted weighed $4\frac{1}{2}$, $3\frac{1}{2}$, $3\frac{1}{4}$ and 3 lbs. Many more could have been taken but if one rose, which was not a good one, I did not try to hook it and passed on. Whilst fishing the big pool, just above Sonarwein bridge, an otter rose to the surface and remained for a few seconds paddling like a dog, looking at me. I tried to rap him on the nose with the rod point, which put him down at once.

My next visit was in April, 1919, when I took four trout, totalling six pounds, the first day in a couple of hours, the next day, I had got three, averaging about the same size, when the river became full of great logs, rolling down, bumping against one another and the rocks, and making such a noise as to put any self-respecting trout off his feed for hours; the third day, I had only secured one of a pound, before the logs terminated the proceedings, when I finally retired from the scene of action. Very often when the water subsides, the logs get stranded, where they some times remain for days and weeks, forming dams, below which many a good trout takes up a temporary abode, so such places should always be given a trial. I went again six weeks later, to find the water fairly clear, but very high and rapid. The fish, would take nothing but a large peacock and yellow lure, and that I had to work with a fair-sized chunk of lead to keep it down.

I had one blank day, but took nineteen trout in the week, weighing $21\frac{1}{4}$ lbs. best, three pounds, in spite of the snow, as well as

four fair sized choosh, three of which were, oddly enough, foul-hooked. It is strange how often one hooks a choosh foul, for he is a much smoother skinned fish than a trout. I did not consider I had very good sport, for the lure was invariably taken under water, so I never saw the fish before he was hooked, which to me is one of the chief delights of fishing; besides, the river was such a torrent there was not much fishable water.

The Indian Postmaster at Bandapur was one day civil enough to send my wife some cherries from his garden, so next morning I returned the compliment and gave him a trout.

On her asking him later how he liked it, he replied: "Sir, the quality was excellent, but the quantity was utterly inadequate," and then explained that he had a very large family.

According to the register, the record trout for the Madmati is 5½ lbs., caught in 1918.

(14) THE KOKERNAG and (15) THE PANZETNAG Streams.

None of these waters are, at present, worth fishing for brown trout, as no results have been recorded during the last two seasons. The "Handy Guide" written by Pandit Manmohan Lal Langar, Motamid Durbar of the Kashmir State, states that the "Lolab is a picturesque little stream, where plenty of trout fishing can be done." As the book is corrected up to August 1918, it cannot be accepted as giving reliable information about sport.

(16) THE THICKER stream is an offshoot of the Liddar, and is similar in character to the Istihal and Tehsil branches of the Veshau, the water being used for irrigation. It has been adapted for trout fishing, with much success, by dams thrown across it at frequent intervals. It is not yet open to the ordinary license holder, but I was lucky enough to be given a special favour in the shape of a permit for two days. Though weather and water were both unfavourable, the visit was quite enough to show what a magnificent head of trout the Thicker contains. It is an easy stream to fish, as there are not too many trees about to catch one's line, the banks are not too high and the pools are of good length and fairly deep. It lies ten

miles along the road to Palgam from Khanabal, which is drivable. The road crosses the river in the middle of the best water, which stretches for a little over a mile above, and about the same distance below the bridge, so it will seem, from this short distance, why too generous an issue of permits cannot be made. The fish run to a very respectable size, but judging from the remarks of those who have fished it, do not take the small fly well, they evidently prefer a lure of some sort. They have been taken up to seven pounds in weight, whilst two and three pounders are common. My first day, in spite of the discoloured state of the water, I got over a dozen, of which six were over two pounds, but I returned all hens, keeping only three cocks of $2\frac{1}{2}$ lbs., 1 lb. 14 oz. and 2 lbs. 2 oz. I had hold of one about 26 inches long, which finally ran into a clump of weed close to the bank. I told the net-coolie to wade in and clear the green stuff off the line, which the trout was towing about, but the idiot, instead of removing it, caught hold of the cast and pulled the hook out of the fish's mouth. I did not say very much, expecting to get another quite as big, but was disappointed, though I touched a couple. The second day, there was thunder about, and I only rose four, of which three were kept, so had I not had better sport on the previous day, I might have thought there was no specially good stock of fish, so few were visible. I do not know if trout breed in the Thicker, but it looks as if they tried to, for I caught one about four inches long, which could not have been one of the two year olds put in the last year, and a chiru, I caught, threw up another of much the same size. There must be many irrigation branches in Kashmir, similar to the Thicker, which could be stocked. One is inclined to think the reason, for trout not being supposed to breed in many of these rivers, is that the local fish, which outnumber them many times and are in their best condition when trout are at their worst, eat up most of the spawn and polish off nearly the fry, which may hatch from any left over, for there are plenty of good redds in most of the rivers. That the water does not dry up in winter is proved by the trout remaining in these streams. The temperature in the breeding season must be right, or the ova in the hatcheries, which are at the same elevation as many of the rivers, would not hatch out. It would be impossible, as well as unwise, to extirpate all the local fish in the trout waters; for their young provide

a good food supply for trout, but an effort could be made, at very little cost, to reduce their numbers, in order to see if this would not give the trout a better chance. If the big coarse fish were thoroughly cleared out for even one summer, when they run up to breed, it would take some time for their numbers to increase again, by which time the trout would probably be established in sufficient numbers to hold their own successfully.

When at the Thicker I discovered why none of the streamlets, flowing through the fields, ever contain any fish.

On turning a corner, I saw two men suddenly get up from the river bank and bolt for the nearest village.

They had dammed up the head of one of the irrigation cuts where it left the big stream, and were groping out the fish from under the stones and banks. I picked up two choosh, which they had left kicking amongst the grass.

Rather an amusing little story is related about the Thicker. It is said that a brain wave occurred to one of the officials, chiefly concerned with stocking the trout waters, that this would be a most suitable little stream to stock for his own private sport ; so he did so without saying a word to anyone. Two or three years later, another official, going to Palgam, gave it a try, not knowing it was stocked and to his surprise, pulled out several trout, so he stocked it too, and kept quiet about it, which resulted in its getting the nickname of "the Hush-Hush." It seems, however, highly improbable that anything like the stocking of a river could take place, without other interested persons hearing of it, when one remembers what a great love the Kashmiri has for repeating the most trifling gossip to everyone he meets.

(17) GANGABAL AND THE ADJOINING LAKES have been referred to in the paragraph on the Wangat (7). They lie at an attitude of roughly 12,000 feet. Lake Gangabal is literally and actually a sanctuary, and therefore no permits are issued. The day of the adjoining lakes has not yet come. They are all somewhat inaccessible being three or four days' march from any where

where a houseboat can go, and ponies can only get over the pass from middle of June to the end of September. Kashmiri Hindus consider Gangabal to be the source of the Ganges, hence the name.

(18) THE MANASBAL, is one of the most beautiful bits of scenery in Kashmir, so it is surprising one so seldom sees it in photographs or paintings. The open surface of water is about two miles long and three quarters of a mile wide. The lake is very deep and clear, with a good deal of weed, water-lilies and rushes round the edges. It lies a mile north of Sambal, on the Jhelum, below Srinagar, and is easily approached from there by means of a small boat, or on foot. On its north-west side lies the Darogha Bagh, which was one of the terraced gardens built by the Emperour Jehangir for his favourite wife, Nurjuhan. The site of the garden is now occupied by a village, but the walls, which were built up from the water's edge to form the terraces, still remain and look like the ruined bastions of an old fort. Beyond it again is a cave, which was tunnelled out by a fakir, who intended it for his grave, and then, by the irony of fate, or his friends' disregard of his wishes, was buried outside it in the garden, which he used to cultivate and which still produces excellent fruit. A few thousand "Rainbow" trout were put into this lake in 1916 and 1919 and there are also plenty of local fish, chiru, choosh, khont, etc., but they do not rise here freely. No doubt, good sport could be obtained by raking out the weed in some selected spot, ground-baiting and then bottom-fishing from the bank, as is done in large tanks in Bengal, and it should be well worth trying by anyone, who cares for this form of amusement.

CHAPTER V.

A LAST DAY WITH THE TROUT.

I have given accounts of some red-letter days on the Kashmir rivers, so it only remains to show that one cannot expect constant good luck. It was getting near the end of September, and being greedy, I still hankered after another good day to wind up the season, so requested leave to try the "Hush-Hush," once more.

This little river is a long way from Srinagar, but as I was going to pass it on the way to a shooting trip, it could be fished without extra trouble.

Permission was generously given, a very special favour, which was duly appreciated, as only about three rods, with the exception of some state officials, had fished it this season.

I arrived there one afternoon, and whilst camp was being pitched, went with a friend, whom I met there, to have a look at the water. The "Hush-Hush," which flows through a valley of rice fields, was low and clear, and the banks were rather more free from obstructions than on other streams of a similar sort in Kashmir. Many good trout were visible and there were comparatively few local fish, which augurs well for its future, as the trout should have a fair chance of breeding, for their ova and fry will have fewer enemies. The register, which the head watcher gave me to look at, showed that the average size of fish taken during the last two seasons was well over two pounds, while two or three specimens ran up to seven, which is excellent for a water first stocked only four years ago. It was then stocked with two year olds, and these, as well as yearlings, have been put in annually since. I gathered it was the custom to put back any thing under a pound, though the limit here, as elsewhere, is nine inches or six ounces.

The trout, however, were not moving properly this evening, so we returned to camp, after trying a few pools.

In many places were dams made of boulders, and they had been pretty badly knocked about by log rolling, which occurs in the

spring and early summer, so one wondered if it would not be possible to fell trees and anchor them, backed with boulders, to enable the logs to slide over without displacing them as they do the stones. It was soon apparent how well the "Hush-Hush" is preserved for there is only about four miles of fishing, and in the short time we were out, we saw three watchers.

Next morning, after a night much disturbed by the yapping, and quarrelling of village dogs prowling about camp to see what they could pick up, I made my way to the waterside and mounted a large fly on a fine undrawn gut cast, on which several good fish had met an untimely end. A magnificent old chenar tree overhung the left bank, and the stream boiled up against its roots, making a fine eddy, which lower down spread out into a nice pool. Casting the fly into the rush of water, I worked it round into the eddy and a big trout of three or four pounds rolled up like a porpoise and took it. I just felt him and the line came back, minus the fly. Will one ever learn not to put on gut, that has been well used and then put away for some time? for it almost always means disaster and the loss of a bait, which may possibly be worth more than a new cast. Putting on a fresh cast, I fished out the pool and hooked a fish at the tail of it, which, after a good fight, was brought to bank, where it proved to be a chirroo of about two pounds. The head of the next stream produced a fine little fighting trout of $1\frac{1}{2}$ lb. but as her condition showed that she was soon going to do her duty to the state she went back to do so.

Continuing to work down stream, eleven more trout were taken, but nothing over a pound, so it was evident that the water was too clear and the sun too bright for downstream fishing, I therefore walked back to the bridge and commenced to fish up. Here there was a fine pool, the river running swiftly under the far bank; the first cast produced a lively half-pounder. A few yards further on, a big trout came out from the shadow of the far bank and followed the fly for several yards, turning away now and again as if he could not make up his mind to take it. Just as the line was being lifted for a fresh cast, he made a rush, seized the fly, gave two or three wobbles and was off. This was bad luck. Two or three hundred yards further up is a pool some sixty yards long, with two willows on the near bank

just sufficiently far apart to make it impossible to fish the pool comfortably up or down, from that side, so, making a detour through the rice, I cast a long line across the rapid at the top. As the fly reached the deep water under the first willow, there was a heavy pull, a four pounder broke the surface and made for the opposite bank. Running down and passing the rod round the first tree, I got below him, when he jumped and tried to get into a bed of weed. He was kept out of this, the next tree was safely negotiated and then all was plain sailing. The fish made one or two efforts to reach the tree roots but was defeated, so he kept in midstream, every spot on his body being clearly visible, and his great mouth showed white, as he savagely shook his head to get rid of the hook. I asked the coolie if he could get him out, and was somewhat taken aback to hear that this was his first experience of "trote-shikar". The only thing to be done, therefore, was to run the fish up on to a shelving bank at the tail of the pool. This having been successfully achieved, I told the coolie to put the net over him. He approached the trout as if he was a wounded leopard, made a dig at him with the net, and knocked him off the hook. The fish, however, was so done, he still lay there half out of the water. I told the man to catch him quickly; he made a frantic scoop, hauled out a netfull of weed, when the trout gave a kick and regained his freedom. The coolie now sat down with a shamefaced grin and proceeded to wash out the net, whilst I had learnt that if a decent fish had to be netted I should have to do it myself; those caught hitherto I had drawn up on to the shingle, so had not needed the man's help.

Quarter of a mile further on is a long deep reach with a sandy bottom. It is deeper on my side but the bank is covered with high thistles; the opposite one is fringed with willows, so neat cast is difficult in any case, I therefore decide to try it from where I am and cast up under my own bank. The rod hits a thistle and the line catches. I give a jerk to get it loose, and at that instant an enormous trout comes from under the bank, makes a grab at the fly and misses it. The line comes free and a second cast is made, the fish follows it, but has evidently seen me, for he makes no attempt to take it and, as he does not show to a third cast, I leave him. Perhaps the gut is a little too conspicuous in such clear

water, so a 3X cast is taken out of its case and laid in the damping box. Continuing upstream for an hour, every pool yields a trout or two, nearly all takeable hens, but not a cock over a pound, so they are all put back.

The coolie tells me that the big woody nullah opposite is full of stags, so I ought to try it before going further afield. I ask a watcher, who comes up a few minutes later to enquire how I am getting on, and he says one would have to go two days' march before getting to good ground, where the going is very rough, and there is a much better chance of sport in the place I am bound for, especially as my shikari knows the ground well. I now cross the stream and make my way back to where I saw the big one. On reaching the pool, I cut a yard off the fine cast and attach a fly made of the bright hackles of the black crested tragopen, commonly called the Argus pheasant, and peacock for wings. Running it through my fingers, the gut feels quite sound, so, not wishing to put the big one off by hooking anything smaller, I cast straight over the spot, whence he came out. The line checks and I tighten up. There is a heavy drag on the end with a sort of jiggering sensation. I dare not pull too hard, so look at the rod top. It is slowly straightening. This is a fish right enough. Winding up as I go, I wade out towards him, when off he goes down the pool, and from the strain there is no doubt it is the big fellow. He takes off about twenty yards, then turns and comes up the still water towards me. I let him pass and then put on all the pressure I dare. He goes under the far bank and lies still in the rapid, where he remains a minute or two, every now and then shaking his head. After a bit he goes down again and I follow, and when I am abreast of him, again he sulks. As two or three links of the cast are exposed to the sun, I wade towards him, splashing as much as possible, when away he goes to the top of the pool once more, and so far I haven't even seen him. I try to pull him downstream, but he won't budge, I don't like his being amongst the boulders, so send the coolie in, to drive him down to the deep water. That worthy evidently thinks he has been summoned to make another mighty effort with the net and wades in. As the fish turns, I see the gleam of a very large trout, but it is impossible to tell how big he is, or try to pull him up for a look. So long a

the gut holds, I shall see him sooner or later. Putting on as much strain as I think the cast will stand, I anxiously await further developments. In a little while the trout too begins to find this monotonous, and swims slowly off, taking out a few yards of line, then coming back and letting me regain them, each time coming a bit nearer.

At last, his great waving tail is visible, but he is still far from being done, for his head shows no signs of coming up. On the contrary, he seems rather to wake up and makes a steady run for the bottom of the pool, where, if there is no catastrophe amongst the stones, he should tire more quickly in the strong current.

The water is still smooth close to me and is only about two feet deep. After a bit, he gets tired of the rapid and comes into the slack water, where he is seen to be a cock trout, every atom of twentyeight inches in length, which ought to mean a ten-pounder.

The coolie sees him too and rushes forward with the net, but is quickly told to retire; one of his efforts is quite enough for to-day. The only thing to be done is to play the fish stiff, get him out on to the shelving bank and net him myself. Finally after a long fight, he touches the sand, but as he does so, goes off for a few yards in a whirl of mud, and I call out for the net. He is brought back again very gingerly and the end seems near, so I change the rod into the left hand to net him with the right by the head. His belly is on the bottom, his back half out of the water, he gives one more wollop and, with a flick, the rod straightens out. The top link of the cast has given. I make scoop at his head with the net, he is far too big to go into it except head foremost, but he slides past and with a great swirl, slowly disappears into the deep water. I am too disgusted to fish any more, my luck is dead out, so I wind up and ride on to my next camp. May I get a good stag to make up for the loss of the last big trout I shall probably ever have hold of, and for the only really disappointing day I have had in two seasons' trouting in Kashmir.

CHAPTER VI.

REMARKS ON TACKLE, ETC.

Every angler of experience knows what suits him best, so to those who never have fished for trout in Kashmir, I would merely remark that they should use similar gear to what they would use at home for trout, in places where a four pound fish are not very uncommon; to those who have never flyfished for them anywhere, I would say that, in spite of Calcutta tradesmen advertising twelve to fourteen foot rods, as "just the thing for Kashmir," they will find a single handed split-cane fly-rod, built rather on the stiff side, all that is required unless they intend to go in for big mahseer, when they would find a spinning rod from ten to twelve feet in length, a suitable tool for dealing with this powerful fish. The day of the fourteen foot rod for spinning or trolling has passed. If limited to one rod for trout, one between ten and eleven feet in length will be found very suitable, and preferably it should be steel centred, for them it can be used for spinning a light minnow, or casting a lure or small salmon fly with comfort. A $3\frac{1}{2}$ or $3\frac{1}{4}$ inch feel, to balance the rod and hold sixty to eighty yards of line, is also needed. Cast and traces should be tapered from stout to the finest gut, undrawn, for then they wear much better. These, when time permits, should be obtained from one's tackle maker at home to ensure their being fresh. Though there are dealers in Srinagar, who stock any amount of tackle, unless one is a bit of an expert oneself, one can never tell if their gut is fresh, though I must admit I have never had any fault to find with anything purchased from Mr. Lambert, the chemist, and his prices are most reasonable. As for the native dealers, they no doubt have good stuff, when one can be sure of its being fresh, but there is no more reliance to be placed in their word than in that of any other local tradesman. To give an example:—Having damaged my wrist, I could not decide if I would not treat myself to a light new rod. One of these worthies had a very pretty little split-cane by a well-known maker, but one whose rods I had never used. The price of it was almost double what I expected, so I asked how I was to know if it would stand hard work. The dealer

instantly replied :—"Major X bought one just like this from me last year. He has killed many big fish on it and is very pleased with it." Seeing Major X at the club next day, I asked him how the rod he got from So and So stood, and was somewhat astonished, when he answered :—"I have never bought a rod from him in my life." Now if a man will tell you a bare-faced lie like this, well knowing there is every probability of your finding it out within a few hours, he is scarcely to be believed about the price or age of the rest of his stock. Nevertheless, these men must do a good trade, for they keep any amount of tackle, but no doubt make their money more from what anglers buy to put in their boxes, than what they buy to use.

Regarding flies and lures, it is difficult to advise without appearing dogmatic. Mr. Frank Mitchell, whose success as a fisherman is well-known to everyone in Kashmir, wrote a letter on the flies he found most useful, at the request of the Bombay Natural History Society, for publication in their Journal. This is the gist of his opinion.

The stone fly and creeper are found on all the rivers and he considers "Greenwell's Glory" a good imitation of this fly. The Teal and red, Heckum and red, Watson's Fancy, Butcher, Soldier palmer, Woodcock and green, Black and blue, Zulu, March Brown, Coachman and Alder are favourites of his.

These flies are usually good killers, but it will be noticed that they are almost all "Fancy" ones. My own idea is, that, with trout and all fly-taking fish, one has most chance of success with an exact imitation of what is found on the water (and, in years to come, possibly one will have to study the seasons when particular flies are on the rivers, in India, just as one has to at home;) otherwise one should show the fish something, the like of which he has never seen before, when he will very likely take it out of curiosity.

During the last thirty years, I have fished many hill rivers, from Kashmir along the Himalayas into Burma, and found that there are certain water flies common to most of them. These are not often conspicuous by day, for they seem to hatch out generally about dusk ; one has only to camp by the side of a stream, and watch the

variety of insects attracted by the lamp, to realise this. Therefore, I have had some of the commonest copied from time to time, and those found the most taking patterns are shown in the plate. No. 2 is a fancy pattern of my own, which is no doubt taken for an ant, daddy longlegs, or one of the small dragon flies or lace flies, one often sees on Indian rivers. Small imitation beetles are also very useful, as are the various patterns of "Bumbles," especially the Honeydun and the Red.

Small salmon flies sometimes kill well, also the nondescript bunches of feathers called "lures," which I believe are taken for a small fish; the difference between a "lure" and a "minnow" being the first is made of feathers and should not spin, the second is not, but does.

If you are a beginner and find difficulty in making your line go out straight, try putting the button of the rod inside your cuff to keep your wrist stiff, and do not move your shoulder, let your elbow do the casting. The line may not fall very lightly, but once the knack of getting it to go straight has been learned, the light fall will be obtained later by easing it with the wrist, and aiming the fly as if you wanted it to strike a point a foot directly above the spot, on which you wish it to fall.

Put the reel on the rod with the handle to the left, when the reel is underneath, and wind up with your left hand, unless you are left-handed in which case the handle should be on the right, then you don't need to shift your grip of the rod, when winding in line.

Don't attempt to cast a longer line than you find you can easily manage, and start fishing up stream, it is more trouble at first, but the result will repay you.

See that your line is never too heavy or too light for your rod; if too heavy, it will fall with a splash, if too light, you will find it difficult to put it where you want to. Always carry your rod, butt foremost, and then you are not likely to break the top by running it against trees, rocks, etc.

If you intend to take up fishing in earnest, buy the best gear obtainable, for not only will it last longer, if properly taken care of,

but will always fetch more proportionately, if ever you want to sell, than cheap stuff. The same applies to guns. I read in the "Field" of May 17, 1919 that Holland and Holland charged a man £126 for a pair of guns, and after twenty-five years' regular use allowed the purchaser £60 for them. This works out at about twenty-five shillings per gun per annum. I should say, it was worth that much, to have the satisfaction of owning and looking at them.

I have had many a first class gun and rifle from Holland and, when I sold them, found they had generally cost me about two sovereigns a year for their use. I had a Hardy rod, a few years ago, on which I had caught over a ton of fish, and it fetched within thirty shillings of its original cost when it was sold. No-one could call that an extravagant outlay. Whatever your rod and reel are like, the line and gut *must* be of the very best if you want the best results from them. Always keep your gut in wash leather and damp it for some hours before use. When not used, good gut will last for years, if so kept. All tackle should be kept in tin boxes as well. Dry your line carefully after using, and then, whether it is a dressed one or not, rub that part, which has been wet, with deer's fat. If a dressed line gets sticky, or "tacky" as it is called, it can generally be made quite serviceable again, if otherwise sound, by removing the rough parts of the waterproofing with turpentine and then rubbing in boric or talcum powder. If you use a greenheart rod, carry a bit of diaculon tape plaster, which can be got from any hospital or chemist, in your pocket, it is quite useful to repair a breakage temporarily. Test any gut you have previously used, by pulling hard through your fingers, after thoroughly damping it, and see that the rust from the swivels has not rotted it, it is better to throw away a doubtful cast or trace than risk losing a good fish.

Keep your rod in its bag, and if you have not a box to put it away in, hang it up, never lean it up in a corner. A tin case, like one has for a billiard cue, is a very good thing to carry a rod about in. If a ferrule becomes loose, owing to the glue, which fastens it on to the wood, becoming parted from the metal, it can often be tightened up by holding the joint upright in a cup of boiling water for a few seconds.

Care should be taken that the water does not go above the edge of the metal. Then press the ferrule hard down on to the wood and let it cool, so that the glue, which the heat has melted, can set again.

One frequently sees remarks in the trout watchers' books about coolies bungling the net and losing fish, when netting them. Most of them, if allowed, will try to scoop him up tail first, when, if the fish gives a kick with his tail, it lifts him out of the net. This is quite wrong; the man should wait till the fish is done, then you should tow him downstream, head foremost, into the net, when, if he struggles, it will only send him further in, and the coolie will have no difficulty in keeping him there with his hand, as he lifts him out. The net should always be held down stream of the fish, so that the current will keep it open.

In Kashmir, a landing net with a big hoop should be taken, for one does not have to carry it oneself, and it gives the coolie a better chance with a large trout.

The most killing way of using the lure is to work it like a minnow, only with a slightly longer line. Cast it straight across the stream, let it sink a little and bring it round in a succession of short jerks, across the rapid water and up one's own side. A trout will generally take it as it swings out of the rapid, or else when close to the bank; I have often seen them come right out of the water, when following it up to the edge and they thought it was about to escape. At the top of the run and at the end of the pool, where the water begins to get shallow, are the best places, and the deeper one fishes the lure the better. This bait also kills well in deep still water, when it should be cast near any sunken rocks, allowed to sink a little and then recovered in short jerks.

When the river is very clear, the lure, fly-spoon of half or three quarter inch, or minnow should be cast up stream. This is a more difficult method, as you have to depend on yourself and not on the strength of the current, to keep the line taut, but you can use a much shorter line and it is very deadly. Perhaps it is scarcely necessary to add that, when fishing up stream, you should begin at the bottom of a pool and, if the banks are high, wade where possible, so as to have a background.

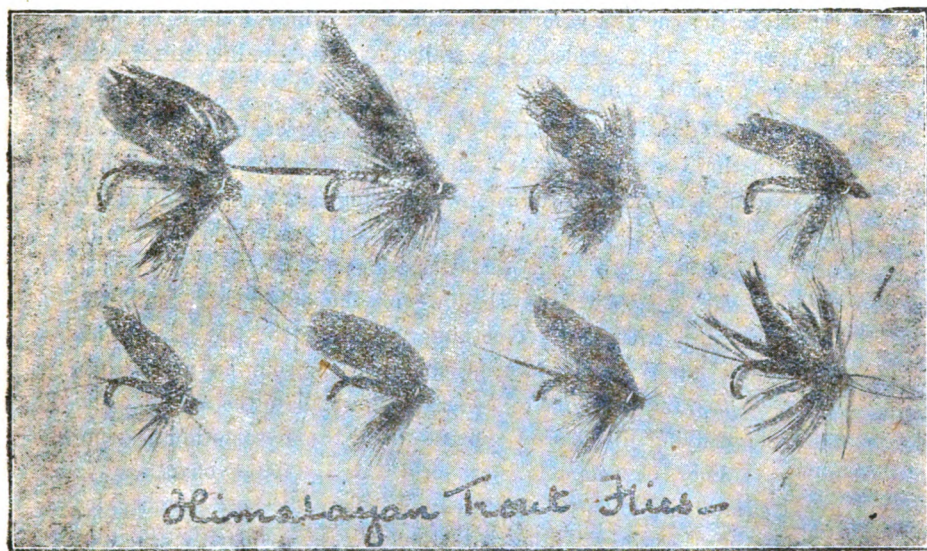
I have elsewhere referred to the fact that, when in camp, one often has more trout than one can dispose of. A simple way of preserving them is by 'kippering', which is done as follows. Split the fish open down the back, cut off the fins and remove the entrails. Rub in salt on *both* sides, till the flesh will absorb no more, then rub in sugar. Prepare a frame of green twigs on which to lay the fish, and fasten this to uprights, so that it is about 18 inches above the fire. The fire should be made of green willow sticks and leaves and should not burn, only smoulder. When it is smoking properly, the fish should be laid on the frame, and turned frequently, so that both sides get thoroughly smoked. They should remain in the smoke till the surface moisture has dried off, care being taken they do not get hot or the skin will leave the flesh. This operation will take some hours, it should not be hurried. The fish should then be packed flat, not folded.

CHAPTER VII.

REFLECTIONS ON ARTIFICIAL TROUT FLIES.

I HAVE often thought that there might be some improvement in the dressing of our winged trout flies, but till Hardy produced Mr. Halford's 1904 patterns, I never saw anything that came very near what I imagined was the correct pattern.

It has always been the fashion to dress wet flies with their wings close together, sticking up at an angle of forty-five degrees to the body and parallel to the bend of the hook. Possibly this was originally done, so that they could lie in a fly-book, without their wings



From the Fishing Gazette.

1. LARGE BROWN. 2. MY FANCY. 3. STONE FLY. 4. KASHMIR SUMMER DUN.
5. SHIMONG YELLOW. 6. ABOR DUN. 7. KASHMIR DUN. 8. DARK RED.

being crushed ; but, now-a-days, as fly-books are almost a thing of the past, this reason no longer holds so good. Next, the wings of most flies are dressed with almost opaque feathers. No natural fly has such wings.

Francis Francis, when I was a little boy, used to recommend that the wings of the Red Spinner should be dressed with the tips of cock's hackles, and I remember a well-known tackle maker in the north putting in his catalogue, that he had never known this pattern kill well, because "when the wings were wet, they were mere threads." This was perfectly true, if they were wetted and looked at, *when taken out of the water*. In the water, though, which is where the trout sees the artificial, the fibres of the hackles stood out and presented a much more life-like imitation of the transparent fly wing than a semi-opaque feather. One can understand that, in a dry fly, the wings should be put on at right angles to the body, standing out from one another, and made of fairly stiff material in order to make them float better; but, when oiling the fly was first recommended (I believe by the well-known editor of the *Fishing Gazette*), the necessity for such stiff solid wings seemed to have disappeared. This seemed to be realised in the production of Mr. Halford's various spinners.

I am no dry-fly specialist, so expect to be corrected, but I take it that, if the body and lower part of the fly are a correct imitation of the natural in colour, size and shape, the wings are not so important, because they are not so deep in the water, but rather floating on it, where they cast more shadow than the wings of the real fly do; so possibly the fish take "the shadow for the substance," and the thick feather wing for something sticking to the fly. This theory has lately received some confirmation from an article in a recent *Field*, which described flies dressed to regulate the shadow, and the accompanying illustration showed them to be something resembling a Palmer, or "Bumble" of sorts. A Bumble I have always found a most killing pattern, chiefly, I believe, because the hackles representing the wings and legs are more or less transparent. I quite recognise the necessity for careful imitation of colour in the wings of a wet fly, because, when the trout see the fly, the whole of it is submerged, and he can therefore better judge the appearance of its *tout ensemble*. But, even then, is there any reason for the artificial wings to be attached at an angle, at which the wings of no natural fly lie? The wings of duns stand at an angle of almost ninety degrees to the body, those of flat-winged

flies, like the sedge, the needle brown, and the various ants lie parallel to it, when the fly is at rest ; when it is drowned, they may stick out at an angle of forty five degrees, but they will be at an angle to the vertical plane of the body, not to the horizontal. Why, therefore, cannot the wings of such artificial flat-winged flies be dressed in a natural position ? Who has ever seen a white moth, for example, alive or dead, with his wings in the position the wings of the artificial are invariably put ? Is there any reason for this custom, except that it is a hoary-headed custom ? There is no doubt that the artificial would look better and float better with its wings in the natural plane, and it should be just as easy to dress them so.

I had done a fair amount of fly fishing, both in Europe and in India, when I first saw the white ant, or termite, come on the water. It is naturally a land fly. This occurred just after the Manipur expedition of 1891, when my regiment was in camp at a place called Sengmai, where we were enjoying the amenities of segregation for cholera.

I went and got some hackles from one of the mess cook's fowls, dressed an imitation with its wings at right angles to, and in the same horizontal plane as, its body. Three times that day, I went down to the river, which was only about a hundred yards from the edge of the camp, and each time, strangely enough, I brought back sixty-one little fish of sorts, running up to about 1 lb. in weight. The white ant does not often take to wing, generally five or six times in a year one sees them do so, and if one has the luck to be on a river, the fish seem to go just as mad over it, as trout do sometimes over the Green Drake at home. Birds of all sorts, lizards, snakes and animals seem equally keen on it.

This imitation is also useful, because it resembles the Stone fly, which is found on most hill streams out here, pretty well all the year round, except perhaps during the rains.

I have seen it from November to March on the North-East frontier and during the summer in Kashmir, where there is no regular rainy season.

In India, no fisherman ever seems to attempt to copy the natural fly on the water, but for many years I have done so, and thereby earned

a possibly spurious reputation as a fisherman, through this very simple means ; for I cannot cast a particularly good fly, and have none of the fancy tricks for throwing into a strong wind, under bushes, etc.

Another thing I have observed, but never remember having noticed in print, is that one gets most of the best feathers for flies from birds, which are common in the neighbourhood of the water one fishes ; for instance, in Scotland and the north of England, the grouse, snipe, woodcock, and, to a certain extent, the partridge provide a great many of the flies which are most useful. " Fancy " flies are not referred to.

The dark and light snipe, grouse and partridge hackles, are as good small flies as anyone can use in the north.

The same principle holds good in India. Herewith is a card of some of my Indian flies, all of which I have used for nearly thirty years, but have not distributed broadcast, still, whenever I have parted with any, those, who have used them, have spoken very highly in their favour, and as my soldiering is nearly over, I should like to give more anglers the benefit of a fairly long experience.

No. 1 comes on in March, April, and May, also, in September and October. It is dressed almost entirely from the hen "Kalij" pheasant, a bird found all along the Himalayas. No. 2 is a fancy fly of my own, which is probably taken for a small dragon-fly, or one of the various "lace flies" found on most Indian rivers. The wings are of cock's, hackles. Another variety of it is tied with a yellow body and reddish brown wings ; it is a first-class killer. No. 3 is also made from the Kalij, body of rat's fur. No. 4 appears throughout the summer in Kashmir, and other parts of the Himalayas. No. 5 is a sort of Yellow Dun, from tributaries of the Bramaputra, the wings should be of woodcock. No. 6 is made from the crowpheasant, really a species of cuckoo, the fly and the bird are both found in long grass in jungly country. I found the fly first in the Abor Hills in 1894, but it is extremely common in the vicinity of willows in Kashmir, where the wings are of a cinnamon shade. No. 7 is a Dun, which is seen throughout the summer in Kashmir, I cannot say what feather the wings are made of, as I sent

the actual fly home to get it copied. No. 8 is found pretty well all the year round, on all streams from Kashmir to Burma. Wings and legs from the hen "Kalij." Nos. 3, 4, 6 and 8 are all flat winged flies, so should be dressed as such, only I cannot do so in such small sizes.

The chief reason why anglers in this country of exile have never gone in for copying natural flies is, I think, one so seldom sees a regular hatch of them by day. Most water flies in India, seem to hatch out after dark and lie up by day, under bushes or rocks, for the shade. No doubt, many if not all of these flies are to be found in other parts of India besides the Himalayas, but I only write from personal observation, and of altitudes from two to six thousand feet.

I have referred only to trout in these notes, but my experience with these flies has, till the last two years, been entirely, as regards India based on streams, which contained only native fish, so I was all the more pleased to find they killed the imported *Salmo fario* equally as well as they did the mahseer and other fly takers.

CHAPTER VIII.

HINTS TO NEW-COMERS.

Having given all the information I can think of about the fishing, it only remains to add a few remarks about one's travelling and living arrangements, for Kashmir is no longer a poor man's paradise, where a subaltern can move about where he chooses, get good sport and fair living, and return with something in pocket out of his leave pay, as anyone could twenty or thirty years ago. Cartage to Srinagar from Rawalpindi costs twelve rupees a maund of eighty pounds, so it will be easily seen that a very moderate allowance of camp kit will cost a considerable sum to get it from one's station and back. Any Agency in Srinagar will supply an 80 lb. tent and a small servant's tent, with sufficient furniture for one person for about twentyfive rupees a month, which relieves one of all risk and delay in getting them up. This may take anything from six days to three weeks. It is of course advisable to acquaint the Agency beforehand with one's requirements, as well as to obtain the book of visitors rules, which gives much useful information about routes, transport, customs, and shooting and fishing regulations, at a cost of eight annas, from the Motamid Durbar, Srinagar, an official appointed by the State for the purpose of helping visitors. Should one prefer to arrange a house-boat for himself, he may on arrival be able to get one at a reasonable figure from its owner, but there is absolutely no guarantee that this man will carry out anything he promises, even if set down in a written agreement, beyond that he may not charge above the rate fixed for the boat, and that he will endeavour to conceal, if he can. But he will expect you to stand by your part of the contract, whilst he may break what he likes of his. At first, I thought I was singularly unfortunate in my experience of boats and their owners, but on comparing notes with other people, I found they mostly made similar complaints. In fact, within a week, at Ganderbal, four people gave up their boats, on account of the constant worry they experienced this year. When we went to Kashmir in 1918, the place was very crowded on account of the difficulty in

getting passages to England, and the only boat we found to suit our pockets, was an ancient tub at eighty rupees a month. It seemed fairly comfortable, and the owner was affable and obliging. We had the flooring lifted, and seeing the bottom was wet, I asked if the boat leaked, but was assured it did not. Observing a rat trap under the boards, we enquired if there were rats and were told the trap was only kept for setting in the cook boat, which was sometimes used for carrying rice. Accepting these explanations, we definitely took the boat for three months, and set out on our travels. After a day or two of bumping into the banks, the water began to come in and there was often an inch or two of it in the bottom. This of course was baled out, but the constant smell of the old damp wood was very unpleasant. After about six weeks, a healthy colony of rats and mice established themselves, and, finding it too damp below, lived in the double sides of the boat, whence they used to issue forth at night to consume our food, books, clothes, or anything else they fancied. Next year, we took a boat on the written understanding that it did not leak. The hull, being new, did not, but when it rained, water simply poured in from the roof, or blew in through the sides, so we evacuated this on return to Srinagar. Our next venture was a roomy new boat, which was not quite finished building, as it wanted the fire places. We told the owner these need not be put in, till after we left. We told him what furniture we required, and he agreed to provide it, if we would give him an advance of a month's rent. This we handed over, and a few days later were surprised and annoyed to find that the fire places had been put in, but not a single one of the things promised. The money advanced had been spent on the fire-places, so more had to be given for the furniture. Subsequently the owner was always worrying for more money and robbing us over the pay of the extra men, required when we moved. We stood this as long as possible, but when he let us go off on a trip, without even one lamp, that would burn, because he was too stingy to pay for repairing them, or too careless to tell me he wished me to do so, and in addition had not taken the trouble to get the roof repaired, where it leaked, which caused considerable damage to several of our things, our patience was exhausted and we parted with this boat also.

Therefore, if it is decided to hire a boat, it is safer to do so through an agency, which will take some security from the owner, and compel him to act up to his agreement.

This leaves less to chance, but it is still up to the tenant to see the owner does not rob him in other ways.

A visitor will be able to see what were the prices for various food stuffs, the rates of wages, etc., comparatively recently, in the local guide books; a fortnightly "price current" is supposed to be issued, but this only eyewash, for the one for the first fortnight of April is sent to the Club, for putting on the notice-board, and never renewed during the remainder of the season. There is hope however that matters may improve before long. House-boats have been built in large numbers, on the supposition that the rush of visitors of recent days will be maintained, but there are already signs that it will not be, for it is now easier to get home, and many people have found living so impossible, they have left Kashmir with the firm resolve of never returning.

Some boats are owned by a small syndicate, who insist on the employment of its members as cook, table servant, etc., about the boat, and point out the advantage of this system as being "the Sahib will have no trouble." He may not have, but, on the other hand, if he runs up against one servant, or more likely his own servant does so, he will be up against the lot and there will be endless trouble.

It is not generally realized that the Kashmiri boatman, or "Manjhi," class is of lower social standing than the local sweeper, with whom they will eat and live on terms of the greatest intimacy. It strikes anyone fresh from India, who knows the way a sweeper is looked on in other parts, as passing strange to see a Kashmiri cook, though he is generally a Manjhi, when on the march, riding the same pony as the sweeper, sitting behind him and clutching on to his dirty clothes. It is not a sight conducive to a good appetite for one's next meal, for it is perfectly certain the cook will never dream of washing his hands, before preparing it, although he may have been provided with soap for that purpose.

It is advisable to bring up one's own servant to cook, for the average Kashmiri, who offers his services as a cook, is usually a most indifferent performer. besides being dirty and dishonest, qualities

especially the former, bachelors seldom trouble much about, though it would be better for their health and pocket, if they did.

The water in most parts of the valley is seldom above suspicion so that for drinking one should assure oneself it is properly boiled and kept in a clean vessel, particularly when there is cholera about. Wherever one goes, one is offered mulberries, peeled walnuts, apricots, or whatever wild fruit may be in season, of course in the expectation of "buckshish," and many people accept and eat such things.

With a little observation, anyone can see that this fruit is collected in dirty caps, ninety per cent. of the owners of which seem to be suffering from ringworm or some other filthy skin disease, and none ever seem to possess a clean cap even, so the idea of eating fruit, collected in such a receptacle, should be repulsive. It is not pleasant to speak of such unappetising subjects, but if one is going on a sporting trip the first requirement is to keep one's health, and as more disease is contracted in India from dirt in the officer's mess kitchen than is from the soldier's cookhouse in barracks, it is as well to mention a few things, which, with a little care, can be avoided, even though doing so risks offending the ultra-fastidious. Lastly, if you decide to go up to Srinagar by motor, which is the quickest, most comfortable, and most convenient, and, all things considered, not a very much more expensive way of doing the journey, when you want to take a good deal of kit with you, you should arrange to hire a whole one, the present cost of which is 225 Rupees from Rawalpindi to Srinagar, from one of the British firms in the former station. Many of the native firms, who advertise to supply cars, do not possess one themselves, so it is a mere matter of luck, if you secure a good one from them. Above all, do not be led into booking your passage through a tout encountered on the railway station, a postcard to the Tesildar, Rawalpindi city, will bring you a copy of the Rawalpindi-Srinagar transit rules, with a list of fares, tolls, rates and owners of all sorts of carriage, which will save much trouble and possibly expense and delay.

There is no more now to be said beyond wishing the intending angler a pleasant journey and a tight line at the end of it.

Note.—Some parts of this book have appeared in slightly altered form as articles in the "Pioneer" and the "Fishing Gazette," to the Editors of which papers I am much indebted for permission to use them again.

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